Aug. 26, 1985

THE NEW YORKER

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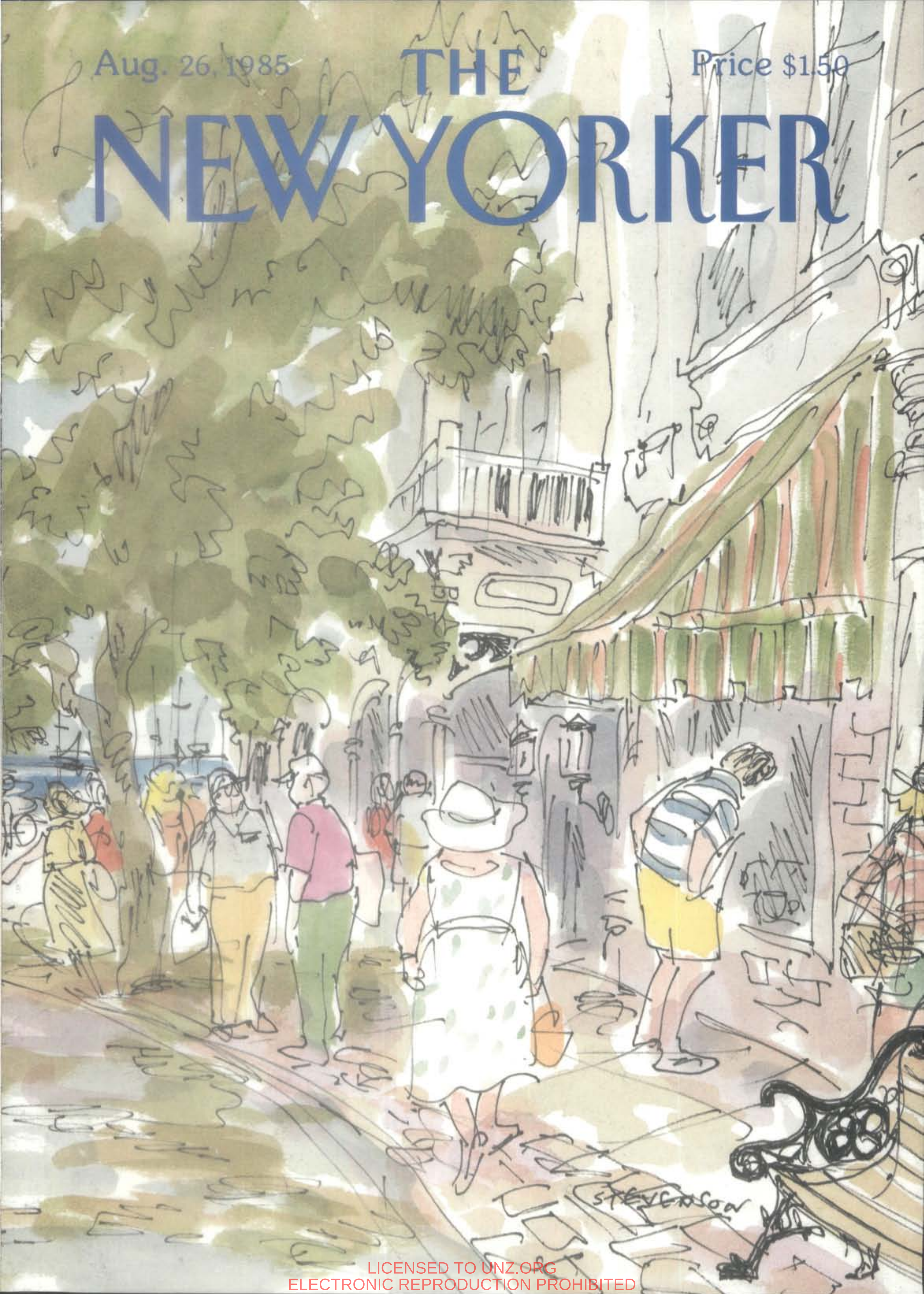

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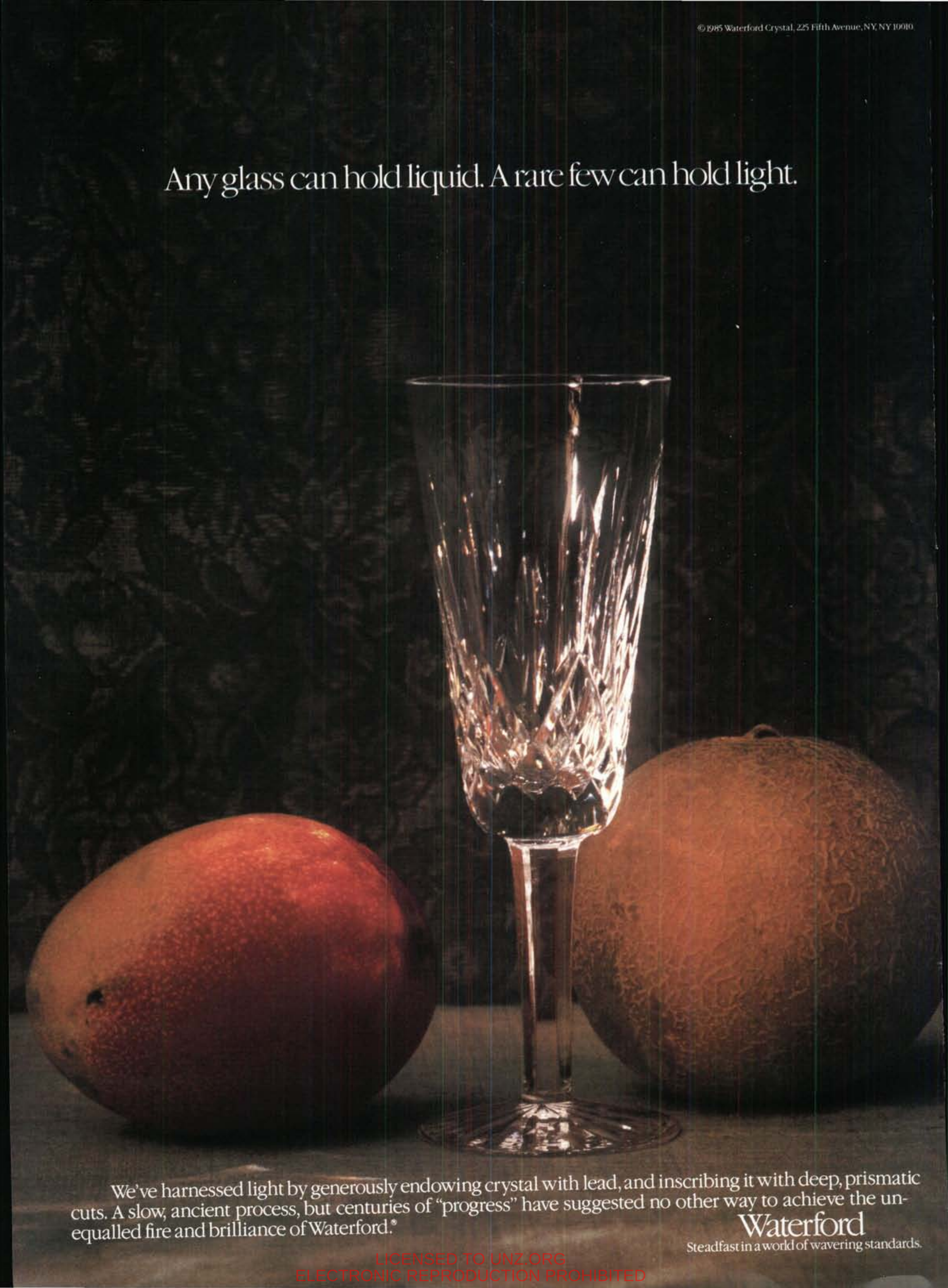
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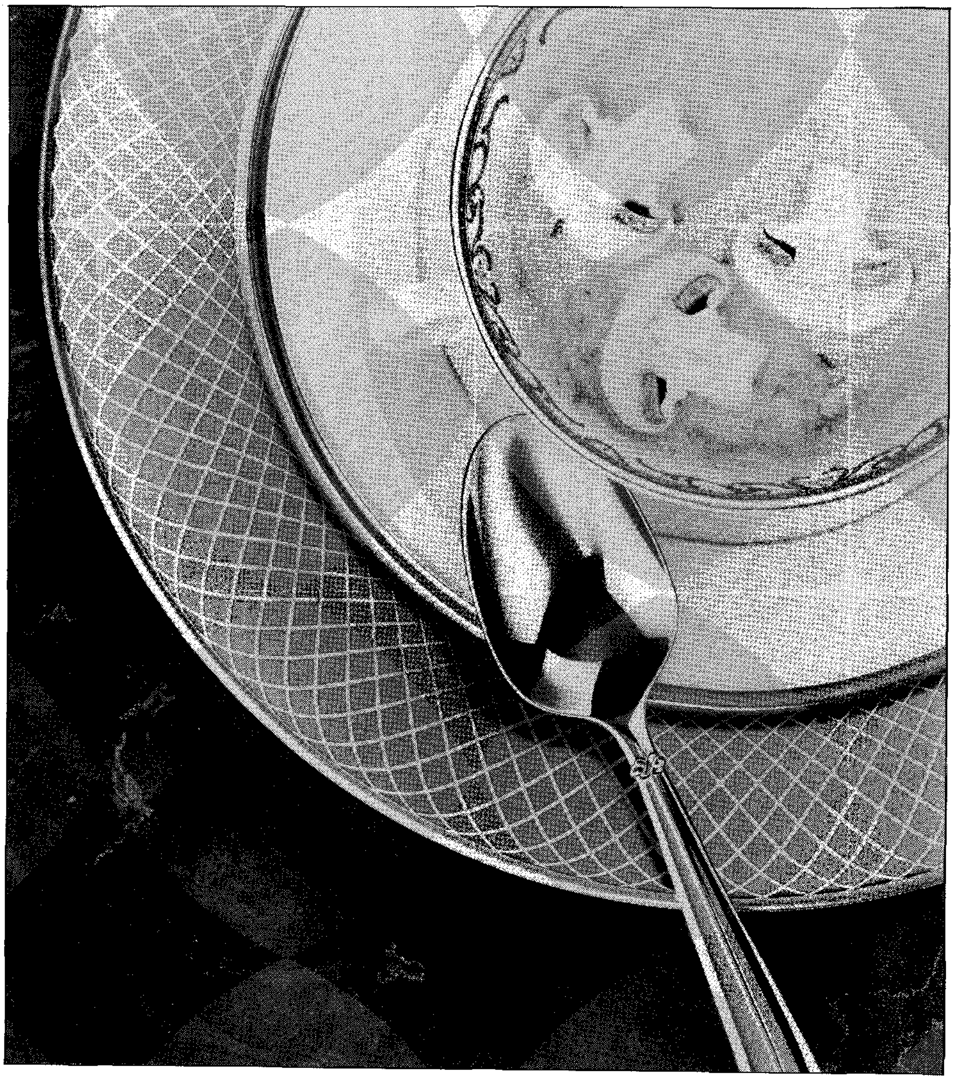

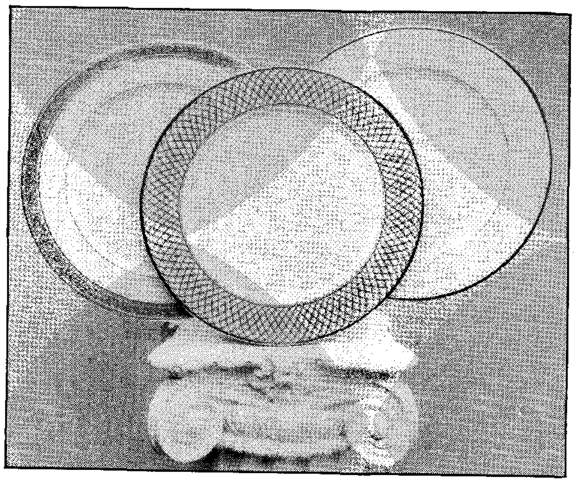

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

A CONSCIENTIOUS CALENDAR OF EVENTS OF INTEREST

THE THEATRE

PLAYS AND MUSICALS

...About Anne—Salome Jens in a one-hour dramatic presentation of twenty-one poems by Anne Sexton. (Interart, 549 W. 52nd St. 246-1050. Wednesday through Saturday at 8. Matinée Sunday at 3. Closes Sunday, Aug. 25.)

American Theatre Exchange—The final production in a festival of plays by American regional theatre companies is **IN THE BELLY OF THE BEAST**, from the Mark Taper Forum of Los Angeles. (Joyce, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Mondays through Fridays at 8, and Saturdays at 9. Matinées Wednesdays at 2 and Saturdays at 5. Closes Saturday, Aug. 31.)

Arms and the Man—A charming early Shaw comedy has been given an exaggerated, overly energetic production, directed by John Malkovich. (Reviewed in our issue of 6/10/85.) (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3. Closes Sunday, Sept. 1.)

As Is—This touching play by William M. Hoffman concerns a personable young homosexual who is afflicted with AIDS, and is also a documentary of sorts about his milieu in this city. The lively, impressionistic performance was directed by Marshall W. Mason, and the acting by the large cast, several of whom appear in multiple roles, is just right. With Jonathan Hogan and Jonathan Hadary. (3/25/85) (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

Big River—A musical version of "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn." Twain's great novel has been respectfully dealt with in a book by William Hauptman, with music and lyrics by Roger Miller. Daniel H. Jenkins plays Huck and Ron Richardson plays Jim. Heidi Landesman has provided an unusually evocative setting—somehow, she has managed to put the Mississippi River on a stage. (5/13/85) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 246-0220. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Biloxi Blues—A comedy that verges on autohagiography, the hero being the author, Neil Simon, as a young Army draftee who, in 1943, is struggling to assume the mantle of writer. Matthew Broderick is the attractive star. Starting Monday, Aug. 26, Bruce Norris will replace Mr. Broderick. (4/8/85) (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 757-8646. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

Curse of the Starving Class—A revival of Sam Shepard's brilliant, humorous, passionate play, with a fine performance by Kathy Bates, as the mother of the family under examination. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays at 2 and Saturdays at 2:30.)

Dames at Sea—A revival of a musical by Jim Wise (score) and George Haimsohn and Robin Miller (book and lyrics). (Lambs, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Doubles—The scene is a locker room in a tennis club in Connecticut, where four men undress and dress and undress while they talk over their more or less miserable lives. This is a comedy. The author is David Wiltse, and the four men are played by Austin Pendleton, Keir Dullea, Ron Leibman, and Tony Roberts. (5/20/85) (Ritz, 219 W. 48th St. 582-4022. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

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I'm Not Rappaport—Herb Gardner's rather synthetic, though often entertaining, comedy about two old men who share a bench in Central Park is given an expert performance by Cleavon Little and Judd Hirsch. (6/17/85) (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 869-4731. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Light Opera of Manhattan—Through Sunday, Aug. 25: Sigmund Romberg's **THE NEW MOON**. (Norman Thomas, 111 E. 33rd St. 532-6180. Wednesday through Saturday at 8. Matinées Wednesday at 2, and Saturday and Sunday at 3:30.)

Mayor—A musical based on the best-seller of the same name by Edward I. Koch. With a score and lyrics by Charles Strouse and a book by Warren Leight. (Top of the Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 982-9292. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

Negro Ensemble Company—A rather beguiling, if lightweight, farce by the Jamaican playwright Trevor Rhone, **TWO CAN PLAY** is about a middle-aged Jamaican couple. The husband is a blowhard; the wife is put-upon in every way, until she flies to Miami and comes back a changed woman. The first act is too intricate for its own good, but the second act is clear and funny. The actors—Hazel J. Medina and Sullivan H. Walker—couldn't be better. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 246-8545. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 8:30; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Saturdays at 3 and Sundays at 2:30.)

The Normal Heart—An interminable, trashy, non-play about AIDS, and its victims in the homosexual community of this city, who are compared to the Jews under the Nazis. The names Hitler, Roosevelt, Morgenthau, and, eventually, Mayor Koch are dropped with equal contempt. The evening is an insult to its audience and, what is far more serious, to the sufferers from this dreadful, seemingly hopeless disease. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Nightly, except Mondays, at 8. Matinées Saturdays and Sundays at 3.)

The Odd Couple—Neil Simon has turned his successful comedy of twenty years ago, which was about a couple of male bachelors, into an unsuccessful comedy about a couple of female bachelors. The cast is headed by Sally

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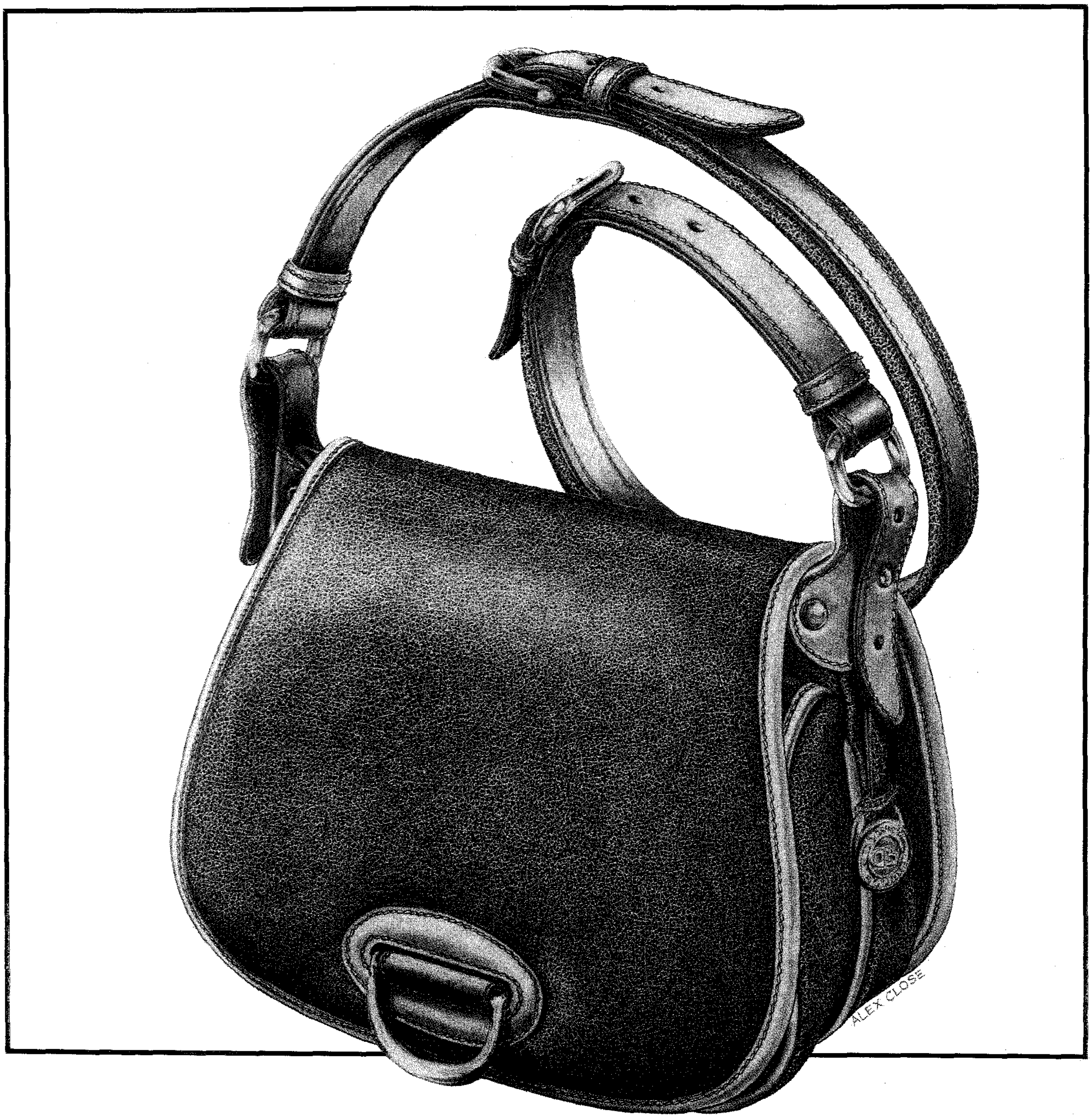
The New Yorker (ISSN 0028-792X), published weekly by The New Yorker Magazine, Inc., 25 W. 43rd St., N.Y., N.Y. 10036; Peter F. Fleischmann, chairman; Steven T. Florio, president & publisher; Jonathan E. Newhouse, executive vice-president; Milton Greenstein, Sam R. Spoto, Robert F. Young, vice-presidents; Elaine M. Matteo, treasurer & secretary; Stuart H. Jason, comptroller. Branch advertising offices: 111 East Wacker Drive, Chicago, Ill. 60601; 41 Osgood Place, San Francisco, Calif. 94133; Suite 2360, 5900 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90036; 400 Perimeter Center Terrace, Suite 180, Atlanta, Ga. 30346; 67½ Chestnut St., Boston, Mass. 02108; 19 South Audley St., London, W1Y 5DN. Vol. LXI, No. 27, August 26, 1985. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. Authorized as second-class mail by the Post Office Department, Ottawa, Canada, and for payment of postage in cash. © 1985 by The New Yorker Magazine, Inc., in the United States and Canada. All rights reserved. No part of this periodical may be reproduced without the consent of The New Yorker. Printed in U.S.A. Subscription rates: In U.S. and possessions, one year, $32.00; two years, $52.00. In Canada, one year, $44.00. Other foreign, $52.00. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The New Yorker, 25 W. 43rd St., New York, N.Y. 10036.



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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

Struthers and Jenny O'Hara, who is filling in for the vacationing Rita Moreno. (6/24/85) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

ORPHANS—A melodrama, by Lyle Kessler, about two young brothers—one a street thief and pickpocket, the other an apparent dimwit—and an older mobster who takes over their house and their lives. The first act works quite well, the second is merely serviceable, but what really counts is the performance, under the dynamic direction of Gary Sinise. The actors are Kevin Anderson, Terry Kinney, and John Mahoney, and the show is an import from the Steppenwolf Company of Chicago. (5/20/85) (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8, and Saturdays at 7 and 10. Matinées Wednesdays at 2 and Sundays at 3.)

PEARLS—Rosalind Elias is the star of a musical by Nathan Gross, adapted from Jacob Gordin's 1898 Yiddish melodrama "Mirele Efros." Performed in English. (Jewish Repertory Theatre, 344 E. 14th St. 279-4200. Wednesday and Thursday at 8; Saturday at 8:30; and Sunday at 7. Matinée Sunday at 2. Closes Sunday, Aug. 25.)

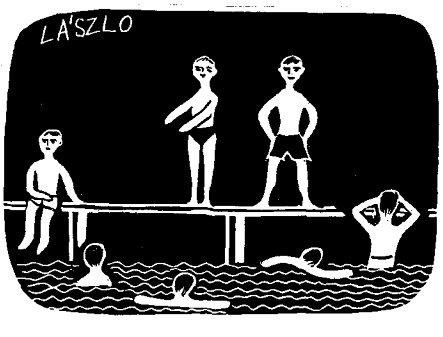
PENN & TELLER—A sublime combination of conjuring and comedy. Penn Jillette does the talking; Teller is silent. (5/6/85) (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8, and Saturdays at 7 and 10. Matinées Wednesdays at 2 and Sundays at 3.)

SINGIN' IN THE RAIN—What could be more bizarre than an effortful re-creation onstage of what a movie once did with consummate ease and grace? Twyla Tharp has directed and choreographed this sad, enormous oddity. (7/15/85) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 586-6510. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

SPRINGTIME FOR HENRY—A revival of the 1931 comedy by Benn W. Levy, with Peter Evans, Tovah Feldshuh, George N. Martin, and Jodi Thelen. (Roundabout, 100 E. 17th St. 420-1883. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays at 2. Closes Sunday, Sept. 1.)

WHAT'S A NICE COUNTRY LIKE YOU . . . DOING IN A STATE LIKE THIS?—An updated version of the 1973 satirical revue by the original creators, composer Cary Hoffman and lyricist Ira Gasman. (Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S., at Sheridan Sq. 691-6226. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

LONG RUNS—**BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS:** A remembrance of things past, by Neil Simon. The hero is a sex-obsessed fifteen-year-old. (46th Street Theatre, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **LA CAGE AUX FOLLES:** A dazzling production of a musical that has little wit and a lot of phony sentimentality about the tenderhearted family life of homosexuals. The music, by Jerry Herman, is Broadway-romantic. The two stars are Van Johnson and Walter Charles. (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 757-2626. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **CATS:** Ezra Pound nicknamed T. S. Eliot "Old Possum," and under that name Eliot wrote a collection of poems about cats, and now the cats are on display on Broadway, with music by Andrew Lloyd Webber, scenery by John Napier, and direction by Trevor Nunn. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **A CHORUS LINE:** A group of young dancers audition for a handful of chorus jobs in a show not yet in rehearsal, and by the time the evening is over we know everything about all of them. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sunday, Aug. 25, at 3.) . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** 10,536 performances so far. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.) . . . **FOOL FOR LOVE:** Sam Shepard's play—mysterious, funny, and beautiful—is about two battling, loving lovers in a motel room at the edge of the Mojave Desert, and about many other matters as well. Mr. Shepard directed. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7:30 and 10; and Sundays at 8. Matinées Thursdays at 3.) . . . **THE FOREIGNER:** A very funny play by Larry Shue, with good performances by every single member of the company, most notably by Kevin Geer as a lovable half-wit. Jerry Zaks was the admirable director. (Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St., near Astor Pl. 254-4370. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.) . . . **42ND STREET:** Once upon a time there was a silly-wonderful Warner Brothers musical about a young hoofer who goes on in place of a disabled star and herself becomes a star overnight. The legitimate musical that has been fashioned from the movie musical is just as silly but by no means as wonderful. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **ISN'T IT ROMANTIC:** A spirited production of Wendy Wasserstein's sometimes painful but always witty comedy about a pair of female "best friends" at age twenty-eight, and especially about the trials of one of them, Janie Blumberg. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3. Closes Sunday, Sept. 1.) . . . **LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS:** Based on Roger Corman's 1960 horror quickie about a man-eating plant, this exuberant, jokey musical is wholly free of camp. The score is by Alan Menken, and Howard Ashman directed and wrote the book and lyrics. Martin P. Robinson designed the menacing plant. (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.) . . . **OH! CALCUTTA!:** A collection of short sketches that purport to give us a refreshing view of sex and do not. (Edison, 240 W. 47th St. 302-2302. Mondays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 9:30; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Wednesdays at 2.). . . . **SUNDAY IN THE PARK WITH GEORGE:** Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine have invented a highly entertaining musical about Georges Seurat and his celebrated painting of the island of La Grande Jatte. Mandy Patinkin is Seurat and Maryann Plunkett is Seurat's model and mistress. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)



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NIGHT LIFE

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which bold-face type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

ANGRY SQUIRE, 216 Seventh Ave., at 23rd St. (242-9066)—A nautical bar and restaurant and music haunt. Wednesday and Thursday, Aug. 21-22, the Michael Weiss trio; Friday and Saturday, Aug. 23-24, the **MEL LEWIS** quartet; Monday, Aug. 26, the Mark Barash trio; Tuesday, Aug. 27, the Robert Silverman duo; Wednesday and Thursday, Aug. 28-29, guitarists **BUCKY** and **JOHN PIZZARELLI**; and Friday and Saturday, Aug. 30-31, the Mark Morganelli quartet. Music from about ten.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—The master, **DIZZY GILLESPIE,** is on hand through Sunday, Aug. 25; Monday, Aug. 26, will belong to saxophonist and flutist **SAHIB SHIHAB** and his band; and on Tuesday, Aug. 27, tenor saxophonist **STANLEY TURRENTINE** will bring in his band. Music from nine. Dining.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—The oh-so-varied lineup: Thursday, Aug. 22, Kenny G; Friday and Saturday, Aug. 23-24, will belong to "Honeymooners" fans and will feature clips from the TV series and a Kramden-Norton look-alike contest; Wednesday and Thursday, Aug. 28-29, comedian Jay Leno; and Friday and Saturday, Aug. 30-31, Bernie Worrell. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at eight and eleven, and Fridays and Saturdays at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty. Dining.

BRADLEY'S 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—The jazz, in the form of piano-bass duos: **KIRK LIGHTSEY** and Santi Debriano through Sunday, Aug. 25, and beginning Monday, Aug. 26, **CEDAR WALTON** and **DAVID WILLIAMS.** Music from nine-forty-five. Dining.

EAGLE TAVERN, 355 W. 14th St., at Ninth Ave. (924-0275)—Wednesday, Aug. 21, John Roberts & Lisa Preston; Saturday, Aug. 24, the **ANDY STATMAN KLEZMER ORCHESTRA,** which will play Eastern European Jewish music, early jazz, and bluegrass; and Wednesday, Aug. 28, Tim Britton & Mark Simos. There is Irish music on Mondays and Fridays. Music from eight on Wednesdays and from nine on Mondays, Fridays, and Saturdays.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—Behind a dark, unprepossessing, easy-to-miss front door, down a corridor with industrial-strength corrugated-metal walls (the kind that would tempt any kid with a stick), and down a flight of stairs, there is this snazzy, cozy jazz room. Pianist **AHMAD JAMAL** is playing in it with his trio Thursday through Sunday, Aug. 22-25, and on Thursday, Aug. 29, **MORGANA KING** will arrive to sing here. Mondays are claimed by guitarist and inventor **LES PAUL,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, who was once known as Rhubarb Red. Sets begin Sundays, Mondays, and Thursdays at nine, and Fridays and Saturdays at eight. Dining.

FOLK CITY, 130 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (254-8449)—Considerably more musical than Tie City or Food City. Wednesday, Aug. 21, Scruffy the Cat; Thursday, Aug. 22, Billy Jones, Ted Durniak, Gerry Devine, and Economy; Friday, Aug. 23, Aztec Two-Step; Monday, Aug. 26, Sonny Ochs; Tuesday, Aug. 27, Reel World String Band; and Friday, Aug. 30, the John Stewart band. Shows are usually at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty.

GREGORY'S, 1149 First Ave., at 63rd St. (371-2220)—**DAVID ALLYN** sings with the Scott Hardy duo Wednesdays through Sundays, Mondays belong to pianist Baba Motta and bassist John Belzaguy, and Tuesdays are reserved for guitarist **CHUCK WAYNE'S** trio. All these groups begin about ten.

HANRATTY'S, 1754 Second Ave., at 91st St. (289-3200)—A spiffy bar and back-room restaurant with a piano in it. Tuesdays through Saturdays belong to **DICK WELLSTOOD,** who, with the quick, resourceful skills of a United Nations interpreter, translates just about everything you might think of into a stride-piano étude. On Tuesday, Aug. 27, soprano saxophonist **KENNY DAVERN** will sit in with him. Sundays Keith MacDonald owns the keyboard, and on Mondays you can hear John Colianni. Music Sundays through Thursdays from eight-thirty, and Fridays and Saturdays from nine. Dining.

KNICKERBOCKER SALOON, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—A pleasant corner restaurant and bar that is crowded with good listeners listening to good musicians. **JOHN HICKS** and **CURTIS LUNDY** provide piano-bass duets through Saturday, Aug. 24, and on Tuesday, Aug. 27, pianist **DON FRIEDMAN** will arrive with bassist **RON MC CLURE.** Music from nine-thirty.

LONE STAR CAFÉ, 61 Fifth Ave., at 13th St. (242-1664)—You're in New York and not in Texas: when they serve you a hamburger, they also bring a jar of Dijon mustard. The folk, country, blues, and New Orleans-flavored music: Wednesday and Thursday, Aug. 21-22, the **DIRTY DOZEN BRASS BAND** and Batucada; Sunday, Aug. 25, guitarist **DICKEY BETTS**; Monday and Tuesday, Aug. 26-27, **QUEEN IDA & THE BON TEMPS ZYDECO BAND** and the Ben Vaughn Combo; Wednesday, Aug. 28, Livingston Taylor and the Pousette-Dart Band; and Thursday, Aug. 29, **JR. WALKER** and his current batch of All-Stars. Music after nine. Dining.

MICHAEL'S PUB, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—Eddy Davis and the Turn of the Century Minstrels are presenting a program called "The Roots of American Jazz" Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine and eleven. On Monday nights from nine-thirty to midnight, Woody Allen usually drops by to play clarinet. Dining. Closed Sundays.

MIKELL'S, 760 Columbus Ave., at 97th St. (864-8832)—The music scene here is cooler than a Columbus Avenue gelato and the music hotter than a Columbus Avenue taco. The lineup: Wednesday and Thursday, Aug. 21-22, the **MICHEL CAMILO** sextet; Friday and Saturday, Aug. 23-24, pianist **MC COY TYNER**; Monday, Aug. 26, **JUMP STREET**; Thursday, Aug. 29, Steve Bargonetti; and Friday and Saturday, Aug. 30-31, drummer **STEVE GADD'S** quartet. Music from about ten until two.

RAINBOW ROOM, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (757-9090)—**PANAMA FRANCIS & THE SAVOY SULTANS** play such uplifting, on-the-mark swing music it's almost impossible not to want to Lindy to it. Shows Tuesdays through Thursdays from seven to one; Fridays and Saturdays from eight to two; and Sundays from six to midnight. Dining and dancing.

RITZ, 119 E. 11th St. (254-2800)—Rock from the eighties in a half-century-old ballroom: Wednesday, Aug. 21, Rick Wakeman; Friday, Aug. 23, the Adventurers; Saturday, Aug. 24, Gary U.S. Bonds and La Bamba & the Hubcaps; and Monday, Aug. 26, Show of Hands. Shows Mondays through Thursdays at nine, and Fridays and Saturdays at eleven. Dancing.

SEVENTH AVENUE SOUTH, 21 Seventh Ave. S., at Leroy St. (242-4694)—Jazz and fusion upstairs in a simple, basic, music-first club. The lineup: Wednesday, Aug. 21, Lou Caimano; Thursday, Aug. 22, Bill Washer; Friday and Saturday, Aug. 23-24, saxophonist **BOB MINTZER'S** quintet; and Monday, Aug. 26, the **TOM PIERSON** big band. Music from nine-thirty.

SOUNDS OF BRAZIL, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great place to listen to Brazilian, Caribbean, and African music—Brazilian-jazz groups, samba bands, reggaeists, and all-percussion ensembles that perform *carnaval* music—and it tends to be swirling, heady, wonderful stuff. Wednesday and Thursday, Aug. 21-22, Malopoets; Friday, Aug. 23, **PÉ-DE-BOI**; Saturday, Aug. 24, **MIKATA**; Sunday, Aug. 25, New Brazil; Wednesday and Thursday, Aug. 28-29, Nigerian songwriter **SUNNY OKOSUN**; Friday and Saturday, Aug. 30-31, **MIKATA.** Music from ten. Dining. Closed Mondays and Tuesdays.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—The **ART FARMER—BENNY GOLSON JAZZTET**, the revived sextet from the late fifties and early sixties (usually with original member trombonist **CURTIS FULLER** on hand), performs through Sunday, Aug. 25. New and old tunes are in the repertoire, written by flugelhorn ace **ART FARMER** and tenor saxophonist-romanticist **BENNY GOLSON**, whose classic compositions "I Remember Clifford," "Out of the Past," and others are among the lushest pieces in jazz. On Tuesday, Aug. 27, drummer (and father figure to countless musicians over the years) **ART BLAKEY** will bring in his Class of '85 **JAZZ MESSENGERS.** Mondays are **GIL EVANS** nights: when his experienced (trumpeter **LEW SOLOFF**, tenor saxophonist **GEORGE ADAMS**, and **HOWARD JOHNSON** on baritone sax and tuba are among those in the ranks) but unjaded **BIG BAND**, with its unmistakable Evansian blur of instruments, plays Charlie Parker tunes on top of a heavy rock beat, it sounds like bebop march music. Shows from about ten. Dining.

VILLAGE GATE, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—Mondays after nine are salsa nights in the barnlike downstairs room. On Aug. 26, the bands of percussionist **MONGO SANTAMARIA** and alto saxophonist **PAQUITO D'RIVERA** will be here, along with guest jazz soloist trumpeter **JON FADDIS.** Three nights of Brazilian music: Friday, Aug. 23, Muzumba and Brazilian Energy; Saturday, Aug. 24, **PÉ-DE-BOI** and Mario Toledo; and Sunday, Aug. 25, **LOREMIL MACHADO & THE SARAVA BAHIA BAND.** Shows begin after ten. . . . ¶ Meanwhile, out on the Terrace, pianist **JUNIOR MANCE** and bassist **MARTY RIVERA** perform every night but Monday after nine-thirty. And, in addition, jazz harpist **DAPHNE HELLMAN** plays Tuesdays with her combo.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—People from all over the world are attracted to this famous, unpretentious basement establishment, fifty years old this year. Bassist **RICHARD DAVIS & FRIENDS** (what friends! **ROLAND HANNA, RICKY FORD, HANNIBAL MARVIN PETERSON,** and **FREDDIE WAITS** are the friends) gig here through Sunday, Aug. 25, and on Tuesday, Aug. 27, **ARTHUR BLYTHE,** the altoist with the sumptuous, shimmering tone, will descend the stairs with his quartet—**JOHN HICKS, REGGIE WORKMAN,** and **BOBBY BATTLE.** Mondays are **MEL LEWIS BIG BAND** nights. Music after ten.

WEST END, 2911 Broadway, at 113th St. (666-8750)—Past the steam tables of piping-hot student food (Columbia University is just across Broadway), beyond the pinball machines is a room full of live jazz. Wednesday through Saturday, Aug. 21-24, will be claimed by drummer Harold White's quartet; on Sunday, Aug. 25, there'll be a thirteen-hour benefit for radio station WKCR-FM, starting at noon; and Monday and Tuesday, Aug. 26-27, Mark Morganelli and the Jazz Forum All-Stars will be onstage. Music from about nine.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—A spacious, airy bar connected to a spacious, airy dining room by a spacious, airy passageway with tables and chairs and pianists and bassists in it. The music schedule: **ROGER KELLAWAY** and **JAY LEONHART** through Saturday, Aug. 24; **HAROLD MABERN,** a good, bluesy player, and **JAMIL NASSER** starting Tuesday, Aug. 27; and every Monday, Jim Roberts and Brian Torff. Music from eight. Closed Sundays.

JAZZ / FOLK / ROCK CONCERTS, PERSONAL APPEARANCES, ETC.

LOU DONALDSON QUARTET, THE JAMES MOODY QUARTET, AND THE BARRY HARRIS TRIO—In a salute to Charlie Parker. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Saturday, Aug. 31, at 8.)

JAZZ CENTER OF NEW YORK—Friday through Sunday, Aug. 23-25, at 9 and 10:30: George Coleman quartet. . . . ¶ Monday and Tuesday, Aug. 26-27, at 9 and 10:30: Clark Terry quintet. . . . ¶ Wednesday, Aug. 28: Sumi Tonooka trio at 9, and Kuni Mikami & the East of the Sun Orchestra at 10:30. . . . ¶ Thursday, Aug. 29, at 9 and 10:30: Bobby Sanabria & Ascensión. (380 Lafayette St. 505-5660.)

GREENWICH HOUSE—Saturday, Aug. 24, at 8 and 10:30: Steve Lacy trio. . . . ¶ Tuesday, Aug. 27, at 8: Billy Bang sextet. . . . ¶ Wednesday, Aug. 28, at 8: Gunter Hampel Galaxie Big Band. . . . ¶ Thursday, Aug. 29, at 8: Oliver Lake quintet. (27 Barrow St. Tickets at the door on the nights of the concerts.)

ART

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Mondays through Fridays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

GALLERIES

SYDNEY BLUM—A sculptural installation of trussed-up bundles (corpses?) spilling out of a handcart. The work is reminiscent of early Nancy Graves. Through Sunday, Aug. 25. (Avenue B Gallery, 167 Avenue B, at 11th St. Opens Wednesdays through Sundays at noon.)

MICHAEL HEIZER—Paintings, sculptures, drawings, and photographs in a show that coincides with his installation at the Whitney Museum. Through Sept. 14. (Fourcade, 36 E. 75th St. Closed Mondays.)

EGON SCHIELE (1890-1918)—Seventeen oils or gouaches, varnished like violins, by this Austrian Expressionist. The subjects include figures, landscapes, and boats. Through Sept. 14. (Sabarsky, 987 Madison Ave., at 77th St. Opens Tuesdays through Saturdays at noon.)

PAUL WEINGARTEN—Thickly painted and extravagantly colorful Manhattan waterfront sunsets, plus Vermont pastorals, by a young Expressionist. Through Friday, Aug. 23. (Salander-O'Reilly, 22 E. 80th St.)

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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which includes a plywood-box sculpture by Donald Judd and a tape recording of artists' names converted into convincing birdcalls by the birdcaller Louise Lawler. Through Monday, Aug. 26. (Grey Art Gallery, New York University, 33 Washington Pl.)

Art on the Beach—Ten installations, each created by a different group of individuals (for instance, an artist, an architect, and a dancer) and each the site of a performance, are the summer tenants on a plot of sand next to the Hudson River. The show is Creative Time's last project at this place. Through Sept. 13. (Battery Park City Landfill, Gate 18, Chambers and West Sts. Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5:30.) . . . ¶ Lenora Champagne will perform on Wednesday, Aug. 21 (rain date Aug. 24); Diane Torr and John Heys will perform on Sunday, Aug. 25 (Aug. 29) and Wednesday, Aug. 28 (Aug. 31). All shows start at 6:30. Tickets at the gate.

Group Shows—At the **artists' choice**, 394 West Broadway: "The Figure in the Landscape" is the title for this selection of paintings by thirty-four artists from all parts of the United States. Through Sept. 8. (Open daily except Mondays.) . . . **center for african art**, 54 E. 68th St.: "Sets, Series, and Ensembles in African Art" is about restoring individual pieces to the groups they were part of originally; for instance, five over-life-size statues that were once a single Urhobo shrine. Through Oct. 20. (Open daily except Mondays; opens Sundays at noon.) . . . **ryan**, 452 Columbus Ave., at 81st St.: Color-linocut prints and their proofs and preparatory drawings, primarily from the thirties, by artists associated with the Grosvenor Art School, in London, who found modern movements, such as Cubism and Vorticism, well suited to this medium. Through Sept. 26. (Tuesdays through Fridays, noon to 7; Saturdays, noon to 6; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

¶ Following is an arbitrary list of other galleries that are open, usually with changing exhibitions of works pulled from their stock: **davis & langdale**, 746 Madison Ave., at 65th St. . . . **fischbach**, 24 W. 57th St. . . . **french**, 41 W. 57th St. . . . **galerie st. etienne**, 24 W. 57th St. (Closed Mondays.) . . . **hoffman**, 429 West Broadway. . . . **mathes**, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. . . . **pace**, 32 E. 57th St. . . . **protetch**, 37 W. 57th St. . . . **alex rosenberg**, 20 W. 57th St.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Sandi Fellman—Large-format Polaroids of human figures, primarily bodybuilders and tattooed Japanese men and women. Through Friday, Aug. 23. (Witkin, 415 West Broadway.)

Group Shows—At the **french embassy**, 972 Fifth Ave., at 78th St.: Fresson prints by thirteen photographers, including John Batho, Sheila Metzner, John Stewart, and Scott MacLeay. Through Friday, Aug. 30. . . . **international center of photography**, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St.: Two exhibits of Soviet photojournalism—some prints used in the service of propaganda between 1917 and 1941, the rest showing the Russian front during the Second World War. Through Sept. 8. (Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Fridays, noon to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.) . . . **light**, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.: Photographs and works on paper, primarily, completed in the past year by Robert Mapplethorpe, Barbara Kasten, Sheila Metzner, and others. Through Sept. 20. . . . **laurence miller**, 38 E. 57th St.: Self-portraits by Anne Rowland, Elizabeth Turk, Lee Friedlander, and others. Through Friday, Aug. 30. (Closed Mondays.) . . . **museum of modern art**, 11 W. 53rd St.: Black-and-white prints by four young Americans. For dates and times, see below under "Museums." . . . **wolf**, 30 W. 57th St.: Summertime photographs by Josef Sudek, Eugène Atget, Helen Levitt, Edward Weston, and others. Through Friday, Aug. 23.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—Landscapes of the American wilderness and portraits of the Indians who lived there done by Swiss artist Karl Bodmer during an expedition in the early eighteen-thirties. Through Oct. 6. . . . ¶ From the museum's collection of seventy pianos, a kind of genealogical selection—the oldest existing piano, built in 1720 by the instrument's inventor, Cristofori, and about thirty of its progeny; audioguides are available on which visitors can hear them being played. . . . ¶ Also from the collection, fifty-five Chinese figure paintings (silk and paper hanging scrolls, handscrolls, album leaves, and fans), dating from the eighth century to the seventeenth. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Tuesday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—A Kurt Schwitters retrospective that includes a comprehensive selection of collages by one of the first artists to use that form. Through Oct. 1. . . . ¶ Nearly sixty works on paper (not strictly) by six contemporary Americans: Robert Morris, Bruce Nauman, James Rosenquist, Robert Ryman, Pat Steir, and Robert Wilson. (Ryman has used anodized aluminum instead of paper.) Through Sept. 3. . . . ¶ A display of works by two European architects: Ricardo Bofill is represented by photographs of apartment buildings in France, and Leon Krier, who designs but does not build, is necessarily represented by drawings. Through Sept. 3. . . . ¶ A show of more than forty photographs by Zeke Berman, Antonio Mendoza, Judith Ross, and Michael Spano. Starts Thursday, Aug. 22. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.) . . . **note:** The museum's sculpture garden, 14 W. 54th St., is open, free, Friday and Saturday evenings from 6 to 10, with entertainment on Fridays (rain date Saturdays) at 8. Through Saturday, Aug. 31.

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—A show of a hundred paintings which could be said to deliver a cram course in the principal styles used by American and European artists of the past forty years. From the museum's collections and from private donors. Through Sept. 3. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 11 to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—A selection of more than ninety of the drawings that have entered the collection over the past few years. Through Sept. 22. . . . ¶ A sixteen-foot-high abstract version of one of Michael Heizer's earthworks fills the fourth-floor gallery; it is constructed of corrugated cardboard. Through Sept. 1. A complementary exhibit is at Xavier Fourcade, 36 E. 75th St. (The museum is open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—An exhibition of Japanese folk art. Through Sept. 30. (Open daily except Tuesdays. Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—Wood carvings, beaded wood sculptures, and ceremonial masks still used by Cameroon chiefs are among the objects on view from the West African nation. Through Oct. 15. (Open daily. Hours: Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 to 5:45; Wednesdays, 10 to 9; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5.)

Asia Society, 725 Park Ave., at 70th St.—A show devoted to seventeenth- to nineteenth-century Japanese painters who re-created supernatural figures in Japanese folklore—the Taoist Immortals, Shōki the Demon Queller, and Kabuki Ghosts among them. Paintings, scrolls, screens, etc. Organized by the Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas. Through Sept. 1. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—An all-purpose exhibit about wine as a creative stimulant: Chalices, decanters, goblets, and vessels of every kind; wallpaper, prints, textiles, and other decorative objects using grapevine patterns. Also, equipment for harvesting and processing—for instance, a large copper-and-brass still from the Cognac region of France. Through Oct. 13. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Museum of American Folk Art, 125 W. 55th St.—High points in Southern folk art have been gathered for a show of ninety pieces, including paintings, textiles, furniture, and pottery. Through Sunday, Aug. 25. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 10:30 to 8, with no admission charge after 5:30; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10:30 to 5:30.)

New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—The bicentennial of Audubon's birth is cause for celebration at the society, which owns and has mounted all four hundred and thirty-three remaining original watercolors for "Birds of America." Through Sept. 14. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Fridays, 11 to 5; Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

MUSIC

New York City Opera—Wednesday, Aug. 21, at 8: "Norma," with Olivia Stapp, Judith Forst, Robert Grayson, and William Dansby; conducted by Richard Bonynge. . . . ¶ Thursday, Aug. 22, at 8: "I Puritani," with Faye Robinson, John Fowler, Charles Long, and Harry Dworchak; Edoardo Müller. . . . ¶ Friday, Aug. 23, at 8: "Manon," with Claudette Peterson, Jerry Hadley, Alan Titus, and Jeffrey Wells; José Serebrier. . . . ¶ Saturday, Aug. 24, at 8: "Turandot," with Linda Kelm, Elizabeth Hynes, Jon Fredric West, and Harry Dworchak; Christopher Keene. . . . ¶ Sunday, Aug. 25, at 1: "Carmen," with Marianna Christos, Susanne Marsee, George Gray, and Stanley Wexler; Christopher Keene. . . . ¶ Sunday, Aug. 25, at 7: "Norma," with Olivia Stapp, Judith Forst, Robert Grayson, and William Dansby; Richard Bonynge. . . . ¶ Tuesday, Aug. 27, at 8: "Turandot," with Linda Kelm, Elizabeth Hynes, Jon Fredric West, and Harry Dworchak; Christopher Keene. . . . ¶ Wednesday, Aug. 28, at 8: "Manon," with Faith Esham, Jerry Hadley, Alan Titus, and Jeffrey Wells; José Serebrier. . . . ¶ Thursday, Aug. 29, at 8: "Norma," with Olivia Stapp, Judith Forst, John Absalom, and Jeffrey Wells; Richard Bonynge. . . . ¶ Friday, Aug. 30, at 8, and Saturday, Aug. 31, at 2: "The Merry Widow," with Leigh Munro, Susanne Marsee, Mark Thomsen, and Alan Titus; Imre Pallo. . . . ¶ Saturday, Aug. 31, at 8: "The Merry Widow," with Claudia Cummings, Carol Sparrow, Cris Groenendaal, and Michael Cousins; Imre Pallo. (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through Sunday, Nov. 17.)

Mostly Mozart Festival—Final performances of a season of orchestra, chamber music, and recital programs. All programs start at 8, with pre-concert recitals at 7. Wednesday, Aug. 21: Gerard Schwarz conducting the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra, with Jean-Pierre Rampal, flute, and Grant Johannesen, piano. . . . ¶ Thursday, Aug. 22: The Beaux Arts Trio. . . . ¶ Friday and Saturday, Aug. 23-24: Gerard Schwarz conducting the orchestra, with Claudio Arrau, piano. (No pre-concert recitals.) (Avery Fisher Hall. 874-2424.)

IN THE COUNTRY

Tanglewood Festival—Final performances of the season—Friday, Aug. 23, at 7: John Oliver directing the Tanglewood Festival Chorus, with members of the Boston Boy Choir. . . . ¶ Friday, Aug. 23, at 9: Michael Tilson Thomas conducting the Boston Symphony and acting as piano soloist. . . . ¶ Saturday, Aug. 24, at 8:30: Michael Tilson Thomas conducting, with Cho-Liang Lin, violin. . . . ¶ Sunday, Aug. 25, at 2:30: Seiji Ozawa directing a Richard Strauss–Orff program, with Erie Mills, soprano; John Aler, tenor; Håkan Hagegård, baritone; the Tanglewood Festival Chorus; and the Boston Boy Choir. . . . ¶ Tuesday, Aug. 27, at 2:30: The annual "Tanglewood-on-Parade" program including offerings by the student departments of the Tanglewood Music Center and a concert (at 9) by the Boston Symphony, with Peter Serkin, piano; the Boston Pops; and the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra, conducted variously by Seiji Ozawa, John Williams, and Joseph Silverstein. . . . ¶ Thursday, Aug. 29, at 8:30: Mr. Hagegård and Warren Jones, piano. . . . ¶ Friday, Aug. 30, at 7: The Empire Brass. . . . ¶ Friday, Aug. 30, at 9: Itzhak Perlman, violin, and Samuel Sanders, piano. . . . ¶ Saturday, Aug. 31, at 8:30: Seiji Ozawa conducting the Boston Symphony in a performance of Mahler's Ninth Symphony. . . . ¶ Sunday, Sept. 1, at 2:30: Seiji Ozawa conducting an all-Beethoven program, with Mr. Perlman. (Lenox, Mass. For information about tickets, call 1-413 637-1666.)

Caramoor Festival—Final performances of the season—Friday, Aug. 23, at 9: Garrick Ohlsson, piano. . . . ¶ Saturday, Aug. 24, at 8:30: John Nelson conducting the Orchestra of St. Luke's, with Yo-Yo Ma, cello. (A benefit concert.) . . . ¶ Sunday, Aug. 25, at 5:30: The St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble in a performance of the complete Bach Brandenburg Concertos. (Katonah, N.Y. For information about tickets, call 1-914 232-5035.)

Saratoga Performing Arts Center—Final performances by the **PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA:** Wednesday, Aug. 21: Erich Leinsdorf conducting, with Norman Carol, violin, and Richard Woodhams, oboe. . . . ¶ Thursday, Aug. 22: Gunther Schuller conducting, with the New England Ragtime Ensemble. . . . ¶ Friday, Aug. 23: Erich Leinsdorf conducting, with Anthony Gigliotti, clarinet, and Bernard Garfield, bassoon. . . . ¶ Saturday, Aug. 24: Erich Leinsdorf directing, with Marilyn Costello, harp; Murray Panitz, flute; and the Saratoga-Potsdam Chorus. . . . **SPECIAL CONCERTS:** Sunday, Aug. 25: Melissa Manchester and Steve Landesberg. . . . ¶ Monday, Aug. 26: Power Station and Go West. . . . ¶ Tuesday, Aug. 27: Aerosmith. . . . ¶ Wednesday, Aug. 28: Crosby, Stills & Nash. . . . ¶ Thursday, Aug. 29: Arlo Guthrie and Pete Seeger. . . . ¶ Friday, Aug. 30: George Benson. (Saratoga Springs. Evenings at 8:15. Through Monday, Sept. 2. For information about tickets, call 977-9020, in New York.)

Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival—Final programs of the season. Through Saturday, Aug. 24: The Jacob's Pillow Jazz Dance Ensemble and the Gus Solomons Company/Dance. . . . ¶ Tuesday through Saturday, Aug. 27-31: Juggler Michael Moschen and clown Bob Berky. (Becket, Mass. Tuesdays through Thursdays at 8; Fridays at 8:30; and Saturdays at 2 and 8:30. For information about tickets, call 1-413 243-0745.)

SPORTS

Baseball—**METS** at Shea Stadium: Vs. San Francisco, Wednesday and Thursday, Aug. 21-22, at 7:35. . . . ¶ San Diego, Friday, Aug. 23, at 5:35 (twi-night doubleheader); Saturday, Aug. 24, at 7:35; and Sunday, Aug. 25, at 1:35. . . . ¶ Los Angeles, Monday and Tuesday, Aug. 26-27, at 7:35. . . . **YANKEES** at Yankee Stadium: Vs. California, Thursday and Friday, Aug. 29-30, at 8, and Saturday, Aug. 31, at 1.

Professional Football—Giants vs. Jets, in an exhibition game. (Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands. Saturday, Aug. 24, at 8.)

Golf—Walker Cup Matches. (Pine Valley Golf Club, Pine Valley, N.J. Wednesday and Thursday, Aug. 21-22.) . . . ¶ U.S.G.A. Amateur Championship. (Montclair Golf Club, Montclair, N.J. Tuesday through Sunday, Aug. 27-Sept. 1.)

Racing—At **SARATOGA:** Daily at 1:30; through Monday, Aug. 26. The Seneca Handicap, Thursday, Aug. 22; the Delaware Handicap, Saturday, Aug. 24; the Hopeful, Sunday, Aug. 25; and the Spinaway, Monday, Aug. 26. . . . **BELMONT:** Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1, from Wednesday, Aug. 28, through Monday, Oct. 21. The Gazelle Handicap, Wednesday, Aug. 28, and the Woodward, Saturday, Aug. 31. (Frequent trains will leave Penn Station for the track Mondays and Wednesdays through Fridays between 10:53 and 12:59, and Saturdays and Sundays between 10:58 and 1:04.) . . . **MONMOUTH PARK,** Oceanport, N.J.: Weekdays at 1:30; through Saturday, Aug. 31. The Longfellow Handicap, Saturday, Aug. 24. . . . **ATLANTIC CITY,** Mays Landing, N.J.: Weeknights at 8; through Saturday, Aug. 31.

Tennis—United States Open Championships. (U.S.T.A. National Tennis Center, Flushing Meadow. Tuesday, Aug. 27, through Thursday, Sept. 5, at 11 and 7:30; Friday and Saturday, Sept. 6-7, at 11; and Sunday, Sept. 8, at noon. For information about tickets, call 1-718 271-5100.)

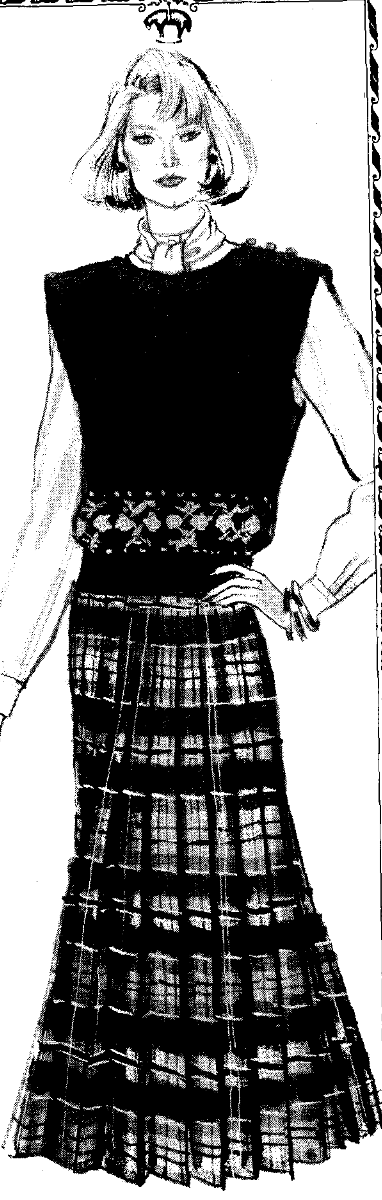
THE GREAT OUTDOORS

New York Shakespeare Festival—Betty Buckley, Cleo Laine, and George Rose in **THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD,** a musical by Rupert Holmes that was suggested by Charles Dickens' unfinished novel of the same name. The second of two productions. (Delacorte Theatre, Central Park near W. 81st St. Nightly, except Mondays, at 8. Closes Sunday, Sept. 1. For information about free tickets, call 861-7277.)

New York Philharmonic—Concerts in various city parks. Leonard Slatkin will conduct the first in a series of three peripatetic programs. **MARINE PARK,** Brooklyn, Thursday, Aug. 22, at 8. . . . ¶ Zubin Mehta will conduct the second program (with Neil Shicoff, tenor). **PROSPECT PARK,** Brooklyn, Tuesday, Aug. 27, at 8. . . . **VAN CORTLANDT PARK,** the Bronx, Wednesday, Aug. 28, at 8.

Music Festival on the Pier—The Miller beer people's summertime concerts. Friday, Aug. 23: Steel Pulse. . . . ¶ Thursday, Aug. 29: Squeeze, the Truth, and the Hooters. (Pier 84, Twelfth Ave. at 45th St. Evenings at 7:30; through Saturday, Sept. 14. For information about tickets, call 249-8870.)

Lincoln Center Out-of-Doors—A four-week festival of dance, chamber music, country music, jazz, and street theatre. **LINCOLN CENTER PLAZA:** Wednesday, Aug. 21, "Malpractice, or Love's the Best Doctor," by the Dell'Arte Players Company of California, at 5. . . . ¶ Thursday, Aug. 22, "Animal Tales of India," by the East-West Fusion Theatre (for children), at 10:30; Spoke the Hub Dancing at 5; and the Manhattan Marimba Quartet at 6:15. . . . ¶ Friday, Aug. 23, "Music in the Western Country," by the Capricorn Theatre Company, at 5. . . . ¶ Saturday, Aug. 24, Mini Events at noon, Dance Compass of New Jersey at 2:30, and RACCA Singers' Satellite at 5. . . . ¶ Sunday, Aug. 25, a program called "Folk Heritage Encounters" at noon, Myung Sook Chun Korean Dancers at 1, Cajun music performed by Beausoleil at 2; Appalachian Delta music performed by Sid Selvidge at 3, Celtic music performed by the Tannahill Weavers at 4, music and dance of Italy performed by I Giullari di Piazza at 5, and Mississippi blues singer Monroe (Guy) Jackson at 6. . . . ¶ Tuesday, Aug. 27, Salt and Pepper Mime at 10:30, and the New York Chamber Orchestra at 6:15. . . . ¶ Wednesday, Aug. 28, the United Mime Workers of Illinois at 5, and the Twentieth Century Music Group at 6:15. . . . **DAMROSCH PARK:** Wednesday, Aug. 21, the Illinois Jacquet Big Band, in a tribute to Count Basie, at 8:15. . . . ¶ Friday, Aug. 23, country dancing at 8:15. . . . ¶ Saturday, Aug. 24, Sweet Honey in the Rock at 8:15. . . . ¶ Sunday, Aug. 25, the Reel World String Band at 8:15, and David Bromberg at 9. . . . ¶ Wednesday, Aug. 28, Condanceco at 8:15. (Through Monday, Sept. 2. For daily detailed information, call 877-2011.)



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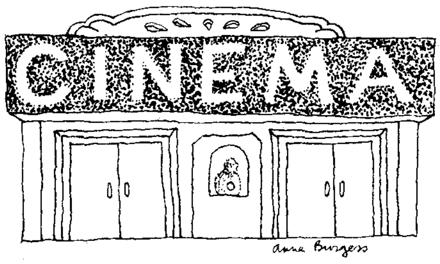
GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES



S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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25	26	27	28	29	30	31

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 10.

EAST SIDE

Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171; theatre opens in the late afternoon and is closed Mondays.)
"Bar Esperanza" (directed by Hugo Carvana; a Brazilian film, in Portuguese), with Marília Pera.

R.K.O. Century Art, 36 E. 8th. (473-7014)
Through Aug. 22: "National Lampoon's European Vacation" (Amy Heckerling), with Chevy Chase.
From Aug. 23: "Warning Sign" (Hal Barwood), with Sam Waterston and Yaphet Kotto.

New Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"Key Exchange" (Barnet Kellman), with Brooke Adams and Ben Masters.

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"Cocoon" (†).

Murray Hill, 160 E. 34th. (685-7652)
Through Aug. 22: "Pee-Wee's Big Adventure" (Tim Burton), with Pee-Wee Herman.
From Aug. 23: "The Protector" (James Glickenhaus), with Jackie Chan.

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: Through Aug. 22: "Summer Rental" (Carl Reiner), with John Candy and Richard Crenna. From Aug. 23: "Teen Wolf" (Rod Daniel), with Michael J. Fox.
Theatre 2: "Year of the Dragon" (Michael Cimino), with Mickey Rourke and John Lone.
Theatre 3: "Back to the Future" (†).

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Real Genius" (Martha Coolidge), with Val Kilmer.

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
Through Aug. 22: "Rambo: First Blood Part II" (†).
From Aug 23: "Warning Sign" (Hal Barwood), with Sam Waterston and Yaphet Kotto.

Sutton, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
"Key Exchange" (Barnet Kellman), with Brooke Adams and Ben Masters.

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Cocoon" (†).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Insignificance" (Nicholas Roeg), with Gary Busey and Tony Curtis.

Manhattan 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: Through Aug. 22: "National Lampoon's European Vacation" (Amy Heckerling), with Chevy Chase. From Aug. 23: "The Protector" (James Glickenhaus), with Jackie Chan.
Theatre 2: "The Return of the Living Dead" (Dan O'Bannon), with Clu Gulager.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "The Bride" (Franc Roddam), with Sting and Jennifer Beals.
Theatre 2: "Silverado" (†).

D. W. Griffith, 235 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Fright Night" (Tom Holland), with Chris Sarandon.

Cinema I and II, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022/0774)
Theatre 1: "Kiss of the Spider Woman" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Aug. 29: "The Emerald Forest" (†). From Aug. 30: "Bullshot" (Dick Clement), with Ron House.

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Real Genius" (Martha Coolidge), with Val Kilmer.
Theatre 2: "Volunteers" (Nicholas Meyer), with Tom Hanks and John Candy.

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"American Flyers" (John Badham), with Kevin Costner and David Grant.

Loews New York Twin 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Back to the Future" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Aug. 22: "Weird Science" (John Hughes), with Anthony Michael Hall. From Aug. 23: "Teen Wolf" (Rod Daniel), with Michael J. Fox.

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"The Gods Must Be Crazy" (1979; Jamie Uys).

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Pee-Wee's Big Adventure" (Tim Burton), with Pee-Wee Herman.

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Volunteers" (Nicholas Meyer), with Tom Hanks and John Candy.

Loews Orpheum 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (289-4607)
Theatre 1: "Year of the Dragon" (Michael Cimino), with Mickey Rourke and John Lone.
Theatre 2: "Summer Rental" (Carl Reiner), with John Candy and Richard Crenna.

86th St. East, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
"Fright Night" (Tom Holland), with Chris Sarandon.

R.K.O. Century 86th St. Twin, Lexington at 86th. (289-8900)
Theatre 1: Through Aug. 22: "My Science Project" (Jonathan Betuel). From Aug. 23: "Warning Sign" (Hal Barwood), with Sam Waterston and Yaphet Kotto.
Theatre 2: Through Aug. 22: "National Lampoon's European Vacation" (Amy Heckerling), with Chevy Chase. From Aug. 23: "The Protector" (James Glickenhaus), with Jackie Chan.

WEST SIDE

Film Forum 1 and 2, 57 Watts St. (431-1590; Mondays through Fridays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)
Theatre 1: "The Flaxfield" (1983; directed by Jan Gruyaert; in Flemish).
Theatre 2: Through Aug. 22: "Signals Through the Flames" (1984; Sheldon Rochlin and Maxine Harris), a documentary about Julian Beck, Judith Malina, and the Living Theatre. Aug. 23-29: To be announced. From Aug. 30: "Eureka" (Nicolas Roeg), with Gene Hackman and Theresa Russell.

Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Fright Night" (Tom Holland), with Chris Sarandon.
Theatre 2: "Volunteers" (Nicholas Meyer), with Tom Hanks and John Candy.

Greenwich Playhouse 1 and 2, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: Through Aug. 22: "Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome" (George Miller and George Ogilvie), with Mel Gibson. From Aug. 23: "The Protector" (James Glickenhaus), with Jackie Chan.
Theatre 2: "Prizzi's Honor" (†).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: Through Aug. 22: "The Home and the World" (†). From Aug. 23: "Pee-Wee's Big Adventure" (Tim Burton), with Pee-Wee Herman.
Theatre 2: "The Shooting Party" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Aug. 29: "The Return of the Living Dead" (Dan O'Bannon), with Clu Gulager. From Aug. 30: "Wetherby" (David Hare), with Vanessa Redgrave.
Theatre 4: "The Coca-Cola Kid" (Dusan Makavejev), with Eric Roberts.

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Real Genius" (Martha Coolidge), with Val Kilmer.
Theatre 2: "The Bride" (Franc Roddam), with Sting and Jennifer Beals.
Theatre 3: "Silverado" (†).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Sesame Street Presents: Follow That Bird" (Ken Kwapis).

Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th. (757-3100; closed Mondays.)
Through Aug. 28: "The Black Cauldron," a Disney animated film.

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
Through Aug. 22: "Silverado" (†).
From Aug. 23: "Ghostbusters" (†).

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (757-2715)
Through Aug. 22: "Cousin, Cousine" (1976; Jean-Charles Tacchella; in French), with Marie-Christine Barrault, Victor Lanoux, and Marie-France Pisier; and "Madame Rosa" (1978; Moshe Mizrahi; in French), with Simone Signoret.
Aug. 23-24: "The Man Who Fell to Earth" (1976; Nicolas Roeg), with David Bowie, Rip Torn, Candy Clark, and Buck Henry.
Aug. 25-27: "Stolen Kisses" (†) and "The Man Who Loved Women" (1977 †).
Aug. 28-29: "A Woman in Flames" (1984; Robert Van Ackeren; in German), with Gudrun Landgrebe; and "Trash" (†).
Aug. 30-31: "Return of the Secaucus 7" (1980; John Sayles).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Animals Are Beautiful People" (Jamie Uys).

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)
"Dance with a Stranger" (†).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Prizzi's Honor" (†).

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Wetherby" (David Hare), with Vanessa Redgrave.

Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Dim Sum: A Little Bit of Heart" (Wayne Wang).
Theatre 2: Through Aug. 28: "Péril" (Michel Deville; in French), with Nicole Garcia and Michel Piccoli. From Aug. 29: "Wetherby" (David Hare), with Vanessa Redgrave.
Theatre 3: Through Aug. 22: "Amadeus" (†). From Aug. 23: "Detective" (Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Nathalie Baye, Claude Brasseur, Johnny Hallyday, and Jean-Pierre Léaud.

Cinema Studio 1 and 2, B'way at 66th. (877-4040)
Theatre 1: "Prizzi's Honor" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Aug. 22: "The Emerald Forest" (†). From Aug. 23: "Crossover Dreams" (Leon Ichaso), with Ruben Blades.

Embassy 72nd St. 1 and 2, B'way at 72nd. (724-6745)
Theatre 1: "La Chèvre" (Francis Véber; in French), with Gérard Depardieu and Pierre Richard.
Theatre 2: Through Aug. 25: "Les Compères" (1984; Francis Véber; in French), with Gérard Depardieu and Pierre Richard. From Aug. 26: "My Other Husband" (Georges Lautner; in French), with Miou-Miou, Roger Hanin, and Eddy Mitchell.

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Key Exchange" (Barnet Kellman), with Brooke Adams and Ben Masters.
Theatre 2: "Back to the Future" (†).
Theatre 3: "Cocoon" (†).
Theatre 4: Through Aug. 22: "Summer Rental" (Carl Reiner), with John Candy and Richard Crenna. From Aug. 23: "Teen Wolf" (Rod Daniel), with Michael J. Fox.
Theatre 5: "Pee-Wee's Big Adventure" (Tim Burton), with Pee-Wee Herman.
Theatre 6: "Year of the Dragon" (Michael Cimino), with Mickey Rourke and John Lone.

Metro Cinema, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
"Volunteers" (Nicholas Meyer), with Tom Hanks and John Candy.

Olympia Quad, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Year of the Dragon" (Michael

Cimino), with Mickey Rourke and John Lone.

Theatre 2: Through Aug. 29: "The Return of the Living Dead" (Dan O'Bannon), with Clu Gulager. From Aug. 30: "American Ninja" (Sam Firstenberg), with Michael Dudikoff.

Theatre 3: Through Aug. 22: "Fright Night" (Tom Holland), with Chris Sarandon. From Aug. 23: "Teen Wolf" (Rod Daniel), with Michael J. Fox.

Theatre 4: "The Bride" (Franc Roddam), with Sting and Jennifer Beals.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Theatres, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)

Theatre 1: "National Lampoon's European Vacation" (directed by Amy Heckerling), with Chevy Chase.

Theatre 2: "Cocoon" (†).

Theatre 3: "E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial" (†).

Theatre 4: Through Aug. 22: "Streetwise" (Martin Bell), a documentary. From Aug. 23: "Real Genius" (Martha Coolidge), with Val Kilmer.

Theatre 5: "Rambo: First Blood Part II" (†).

Theatre 6: "Weird Science" (John Hughes), with Anthony Michael Hall.

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (757-2408)

Through Aug. 22: "My Science Project" (Jonathan Betuel).

From Aug. 23: "Silverado" (†).

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, B'way at 47th. (730-7262)

Theatre 2: "Prizzi's Honor" (†).

Theatre 3: "The Emerald Forest" (†).

Theatre 4: Aug. 21: "St. Elmo's Fire" (Joel Schumacher), with Emilio Estevez and Rob Lowe. From Aug. 22: "Summer Rental" (Carl Reiner), with John Candy and Richard Crenna.

Loews Astor Plaza, B'way at 44th. (869-8340)

"Year of the Dragon" (Michael Cimino), with Mickey Rourke and John Lone.

Loews State 1 and 2, B'way at 45th. (575-5060)

Theatre 1: "Back to the Future" (†).

Theatre 2: Through Aug. 22: "Summer Rental" (Carl Reiner), with John Candy and Richard Crenna. From Aug. 23: "Teen Wolf" (Rod Daniel), with Michael J. Fox.

Movieland, B'way at 47th. (757-8320)

"The Return of the Living Dead" (Dan O'Bannon), with Clu Gulager.

New Embassy 49th Street, Seventh Ave. at 49th. (757-7003)

"Beverly Hills Cop" (†).

R.K.O. Century National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)

Theatre 1: "The Bride" (Franc Roddam), with Sting and Jennifer Beals.

Theatre 2: "Pee-Wee's Big Adventure" (Tim Burton), with Pee-Wee Herman.

R.K.O. Century Warner Twin, B'way at 47th. (975-8369)

Theatre 1: "Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome" (George Miller and George Ogilvie), with Mel Gibson.

Theatre 2: Through Aug. 22: "Real Genius" (Martha Coolidge), with Val Kilmer. From Aug. 23: "The Protector" (James Glickenhaus), with Jackie Chan.

U. A. Twin 1 and 2, B'way at 49th. (247-1635)

Theatre 1: "Volunteers" (Nicholas Meyer), with Tom Hanks and John Candy.

Theatre 2: Through Aug. 22: "Fright Night" (Tom Holland), with Chris Sarandon. From Aug. 23: "Warning Sign" (Hal Barwood), with Sam Waterston and Yaphet Kotto.

REVIVAL HOUSES

Agee Room, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560; on Mondays through Fridays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)

Through Aug. 22: "Desperately Seeking Susan" (1985; directed by Susan Seidelman), with Rosanna Arquette and Madonna.

From Aug. 23: A fourteen-day program of jazz films.

Bleecker St. Cinema, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560; on Mondays through Fridays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)

Through Aug. 24: "Almonds and Raisins" (1985; Russ Karel), a documentary.

Aug. 25: "Metropolis" (1926; Fritz Lang; a German silent film); and "Things to Come" (†).

Aug. 26: "The Virgin and the Gypsy" (†) and "The Servant" (†).

Aug. 27: "Red Desert" (1965; Michelangelo Antonioni; in Italian), with Monica Vitti and Richard Harris; and "L'Avventura" (1959; Michelangelo Antonioni; in Italian), with Monica Vitti, Gabriele Ferzetti, and Léa Massari.

Aug. 28: "The Importance of Being Earnest" (1952; Anthony Asquith), with Michael Redgrave, Joan Greenwood, Edith Evans, and Margaret Rutherford; and "Pygmalion" (1938; Anthony Asquith and Leslie Howard), with Howard and Wendy Hiller.

Aug. 29: "Umberto D." (1952; Vittorio De Sica; in Italian); and "Miracle in Milan" (1951; Vittorio De Sica; in Italian), with Francesco Golissano, Brunella Bovo, Paolo Stoppa, and Emma Gramatica.

Through Aug. 30: "La Strada" (1954; Federico Fellini; in Italian), with Anthony Quinn, Richard Basehart, and Giulietta Masina; and "Juliet of the Spirits" (1965; Federico Fellini; in Italian), with Giulietta Masina.

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. at 57th. (757-2131)

Aug. 21: "The Kid" (1921; Charlie Chaplin; a silent film), with Chaplin and Jackie Coogan; and three Chaplin short films.

Aug. 22: "The General" (1926; Buster Keaton and Clyde Bruckman; a silent film), with Keaton; and "Steamboat Bill, Jr." (1927; Charlie Riesner; a silent film), with Buster Keaton.

Aug. 23-24: "Safety Last" (1923; Fred Newmeyer and Sam Taylor; a silent film), with Harold Lloyd; and "The Freshman" (1925; Sam Taylor and Fred Newmeyer; a silent film), with Harold Lloyd.

Aug. 25: "Pather Panchali" (†), "Aparajito" (†), and "The World of Apu" (†).

Aug. 26: "Mr. Hulot's Holiday" (1953) and "Playtime" (1968), both films directed by, and with, Jacques Tati.

Aug. 27: "Cries and Whispers" (1972; Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish), with Liv Ullmann, Harriet Andersson, Ingrid Thulin, and Kari Sylwan; and "Autumn Sonata" (1978; Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish), with Ingrid Bergman and Liv Ullmann.

Aug. 28: "Viridiana" (1961; Luis Buñuel; in Spanish), with Francisco Rabal and Silvia Pinal; and "Nazarin" (†).

Aug. 29: "Ikiru" (†) and "The Men Who Tread on the Tiger's Tail" (†).

Aug. 30-31: "The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie" (†); and "That Obscure Object of Desire" (1977; Luis Buñuel; in French), with Fernando Rey, Carole Bouquet, and Angela Molina.

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)

Through Aug. 22: "Blow-Up" (1966; Michelangelo Antonioni), with Vanessa Redgrave and David Hemmings; and "The Passenger" (1975; Michelangelo Antonioni), with Jack Nicholson and Maria Schneider.

Aug. 23-24: "Monty Python and the Holy Grail" (1975), performed by the BBC-TV Python team; and "Gimme Shelter" (1976; David Maysles, Albert Maysles, and Charlotte Zwerin), about the Rolling Stones.

Aug. 25: "The Sorrow and the Pity" (†).

Aug. 26-27: "Walkabout" (1971; Nicolas Roeg; an Australian film); and "Breaker Morant" (1980; Bruce Beresford; an Australian film), with Edward Woodward.

Aug. 28-29: "Dr. Strangelove" (†); and "The Mouse That Roared" (1959; Jack Arnold), with Peter Sellers, Jean Seberg, and David Kossoff.

Aug. 30-31: "Days of Heaven" (1978; Terrence Malick), with Richard Gere, Brooke Adams, Sam Shepard, Linda Manz, and Robert Wilke; and "Badlands" (1973; Terrence Malick), with Martin Sheen and Sissy Spacek.

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515; Mondays through Fridays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)

Through Aug. 22: "Weird Science" (1985; John Hughes), with Anthony Michael Hall.

From Aug. 23: "Koyaanisqatsi" (1983; Godfrey Reggio).

Hollywood Twin Cinema 1, 8th Ave. at 47th. (246-0717)

Through Aug. 22: "The Compleat Beatles" (1984; Patrick Montgomery), a documentary; and "Yellow Submarine" (1968; George Dunning), a full-length animated cartoon of the Beatles.

Aug. 23-24: "Alien" (1979; Ridley Scott), with Tom Skerritt, Sigourney Weaver, and Veronica Cartwright; and "Blade Runner" (1982; Ridley Scott), with Harrison Ford and Rutger Hauer.

Aug. 25-26: "The Devils" (1971; Ken Russell), with Vanessa Redgrave and Oliver Reed; and "Marat/Sade" (1967; Peter Brook), performed by the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Aug. 27-28: "The War Lord" (1965; Franklin Schaffner), with Charlton Heston and Richard Boone; and "El Cid" (1961; Anthony Mann), with Charlton Heston, Sophia Loren, and Raf Vallone.

Aug. 29-31: "Under Fire" (1983; Roger Spottiswoode), with Nick Nolte, Gene Hackman, and Joanna Cassidy; and "The Killing Fields" (1984; Roland Joffé), with Sam Waterston and Haing S. Ngor.

Hollywood Twin Cinema 2, 8th Ave. at 47th. (246-0717)

Through Aug. 22: "The Women" (1939; George Cukor), with Norma Shearer, Rosalind Russell, Joan Crawford, and Paulette Goddard; and "Dinner at Eight" (1933; George Cukor), with Jean Harlow, Marie Dressler, and John Barrymore.

Aug. 23-24: "To Catch a Thief" (1955; Alfred Hitchcock), with Cary Grant, Grace Kelly, Jessie Royce Landis, Charles Vanel, and Brigitte Auber; and "North by Northwest" (1959; Alfred Hitchcock), with Cary Grant, Eva Marie Saint, James Mason, Leo G. Carroll, and Martin Landau.

Aug. 25: "The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai" (1984; W. D. Richter), with Peter Weller and John Lithgow; and "Flash Gordon" (†).

Aug. 26-27: "The Cincinnati Kid" (†); and "The Hustler" (1961; Robert Rossen), with Paul Newman, Jackie Gleason, Piper Laurie, Myron McCormick, and George C. Scott.

Aug. 28-29: "S.O.B." (†); and "Victor/Victoria" (1982; Blake Edwards), with Julie Andrews, James Garner, Robert Preston, Lesley Ann Warren, and Alex Karras.

Aug. 30-31: "The Grey Fox" (†) and "The Draughtsman's Contract" (†).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)

Aug. 21: "The Big Shot" (1942; Lewis Seiler), with Humphrey Bogart; and "Invisible Stripes" (1940; Lloyd Bacon), with George Raft and Humphrey Bogart.

Aug. 22-24: "Key Largo" (1948; John Huston), with Humphrey Bogart, Edward G. Robinson, and Lauren Bacall; and "Dark Passage" (1947; Delmer Daves), with Humphrey Bogart, Lauren Bacall, and Agnes Moorehead.

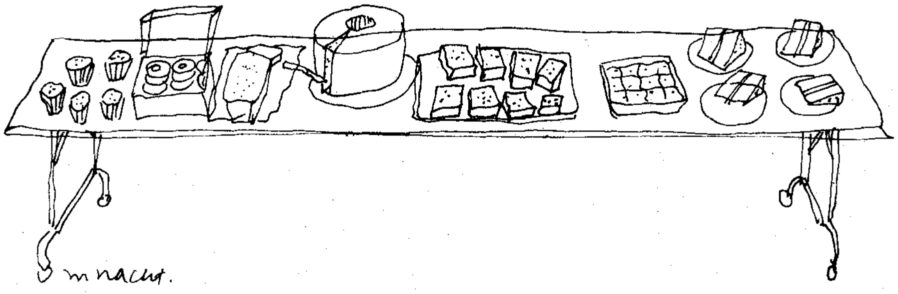
Aug. 25-26: "Dead End" (1937; William Wyler), with Sylvia Sidney, Joel McCrea, and Humphrey Bogart; and "The Desperate Hours" (†).

Aug. 27-28: "Kid Galahad" (†); and "The Harder They Fall" (1956; Mark Robson), with Humphrey Bogart and Rod Steiger.

Aug. 29-31: "Sabrina" (1954; Billy Wilder), with Humphrey Bogart, Audrey Hepburn, and William Holden; and "The Caine Mutiny" (†).

Thalia, B'way at 95th. (222-3370)

Aug. 21: "Plan 9 from Outer Space" (1956; Edward D. Wood, Jr.), with Bela Lugosi;



and "Earth vs. the Flying Saucers" (1956; Fred F. Sears), with Hugh Marlowe.

Aug. 22: A program of Nadine Gordimer stories: "Good Climate, Friendly Inhabitants," "Praise," and "Six Feet of the Country."

Aug. 23: "Ms. 45" (1981; Abel Ferrara); and "Streetlove" (1985).

Aug. 24: "Padre Padrone" (1977; Paolo and Vittorio Taviani; in Italian); and "Allonsanfan" (1974; Paolo and Vittorio Taviani; in Italian), with Marcello Mastroianni.

Aug. 25: "Andrei Roublev" (1969; Andrei Tarkovsky; in Russian).

Aug. 26: A program of Chuck Jones cartoons.

Aug. 27: "Out of the Blue" (1980; Dennis Hopper), with Linda Marz and Hopper; and "Corrupt" (1984; Roberto Faenza), with Harvey Keitel and John Lydon.

Aug. 28: "Picnic on the Grass" (†) and "The Little Theatre of Jean Renoir" (†).

Aug. 29: Another program of Nadine Gordimer stories: "Oral History" and "A Chip of Glass Ruby."

Aug. 30: "Monty Python and the Holy Grail" (1975), performed by the BBC-TV Python team; and "Carry On Nurse" (1960; Gerald Thomas), with Wilfrid Hyde White and Shirley Eaton.

Aug. 31: "Small Change" (1976; François Truffaut; in French), with Geory Desmouceaux; and "Love on the Run" (1979; François Truffaut; in French), with Jean-Pierre Léaud, Marie-France Pisier, and Claude Jade.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

Aug. 21: "High Noon" (1952; Fred Zinnemann), with Gary Cooper, Thomas Mitchell, Grace Kelly, Lloyd Bridges, and Katy Jurado; and "The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance" (1962; John Ford), with John Wayne, James Stewart, Vera Miles, and Lee Marvin.

Aug. 22: "Dance Fools Dance" (1931; Harry Beaumont), with Joan Crawford, Clark Gable, and Cliff Edwards; and "Chained" (1934; Clarence Brown), with Joan Crawford, Clark Gable, and Otto Kruger.

Aug. 23-24: "The Thin Man Goes Home" (1945; Richard Thorpe) and "Shadow of the Thin Man" (1941; W. S. Van Dyke), both with Myrna Loy and William Powell.

Aug. 25: "Le Fantôme de la Liberté" (†) and "The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie" (†).

Aug. 26: "Amarcord" (1974; Federico Fellini; in Italian), with Bruno Zanin; and "The Clowns" (1971; Federico Fellini; in Italian).

Aug. 27: "Red River" (1948; Howard Hawks), with Montgomery Clift, John Wayne, Walter Brennan, and Joanne Dru; and "Shane" (1953; George Stevens), with Alan Ladd, Jean Arthur, Brandon deWilde, Van Heflin, and Jack Palance.

Aug. 28: "Dames" (†) and "Wonder Bar" (†).

Aug. 29: "The Crowd Roars" (†) and "Jimmy the Gent" (†).

Aug. 30-31: "The Blue Gardenia" (1953; Fritz Lang), with Anne Baxter, Richard Conte, and Ann Sothern; and "The Woman in the Window" (1944; Fritz Lang), with Edward G. Robinson, Joan Bennett, and Dan Duryea.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490; a limited number of tickets are available to those applying for them in person at the museum after 11 on the day of the showing.)

THEATRE 1: Aug. 22 at 2:30: "The Judge and the Assassin" (1975; directed by Bertrand Tavernier; in French, with English subtitles), with Philippe Noiret. . . . ¶ Aug. 22 at 6: "The Middle of the World" (1974; Alain Tanner; in French, with English subtitles), with Philippe Léotard. . . . ¶ Aug. 23 at 2:30: "L'Argent" (1983; Robert Bresson; in French, with English subtitles), with Christian Patey. . . . ¶ Aug. 23 at 6: "Every Man for Himself" (1980; Jean-Luc Godard; in French, with English subtitles), with Isabelle Huppert. . . . ¶ Aug. 24 at 2: "The Middle of the World." . . . ¶ Aug. 24 at 5: "Kings of the Road" (1976; Wim Wenders; in German, with English subtitles). . . . ¶ Aug. 25 at 2: "Every Man for Himself." . . . ¶ Aug. 25 at 5: "The Marquise of O . . ." (1976; Eric Rohmer; in German, with English subtitles), with Edith Clever and Bruno Ganz. . . . ¶ Aug. 26 at 2:30: "Kings of the Road." . . . ¶ Aug. 26 at 6: "Ali: Fear Eats the Soul" (1974; Rainer Werner Fassbinder; in German, with English subtitles). . . . ¶ Aug. 27 at 2:30: "The Marquise of O . . ." . . . ¶ Aug. 27 at 6 and Aug. 29 at 2:30: "The Story of Adèle H." (1975; François Truffaut; in French, with English subtitles), with Isabelle Adjani. . . . ¶ Aug. 29 at 6: "Céline and Julie Go Boating" (1974; Jacques Rivette; in French, with English subtitles), with Juliet Berto. . . . ¶ Aug. 30 at 2:30: "Ali: Fear Eats the Soul." . . . ¶ Aug. 30 at 6: "Germany in Autumn" (1978; by eleven directors; in German, with English subtitles). . . . ¶ Aug. 31 at 2: "Gloria" (1980; John Cassavetes), with Gena Rowlands and Buck Henry. . . . ¶ Aug. 31 at 5: "Pixote" (1981; Hector Babenco; a Brazilian film, in Portuguese, with English subtitles), with Marília Pera.

THEATRE 2: Theatre closed.

Truffaut Plus—The final programs in a retrospective of the films of François Truffaut, plus twenty-five of Truffaut's favorite films by other directors. Aug. 21 at 6:15: "Small Change" (1976; in French), with Geory Desmouceaux. . . . ¶ Aug. 21 at 8:30: "Lola Montès" (1955; Max Ophuls; in French), with Martine Carol, Peter Ustinov, and Anton Walbrook. . . . ¶ Aug. 22 at 6:15: "The Man Who Loved Women" (1977; in French), with Charles Denner and Brigitte Fossey. . . . ¶ Aug. 22 at 8:45: "Tristana" (1970; Luis Buñuel; in Spanish), with Catherine Deneuve and Fernando Rey. . . . ¶ Aug. 23 at 6:15: "The Green Room" (1979; in French), with Truffaut, Natalie Baye, and Jean Dasté. . . . ¶ Aug. 23 at 8:30: "Baby Doll" (1956; Elia Kazan), with Karl Malden, Carroll Baker, and Eli Wallach. . . . ¶ Aug. 24 at 2: "Love on the Run" (1979; in French), with Jean-Pierre Léaud, Marie-France Pisier, and Claude Jade. . . . ¶ Aug. 24 at 4: "The Golden Coach" (1953; Jean Renoir; in French), with Anna Magnani. . . . ¶ Aug. 24 at 6:30: "The Last Metro" (1981; in French), with Catherine Deneuve, Gérard Depardieu, and Jean Poiret. . . . ¶ Aug. 24 at 9:15: "Close Encounters of the Third Kind" (1977; Steven Spielberg), with Richard Dreyfuss, Melinda Dillon, Teri Garr, and Truffaut. . . . ¶ Aug. 25 at 2:30: "His Girl Friday" (1940; Howard Hawks), with Rosalind Russell, Cary Grant, and Ralph Bellamy. . . . ¶ Aug. 25 at 4:30: "Written on the Wind" (1957; Douglas Sirk), with Rock Hudson, Lauren Bacall, Robert Stack, and Dorothy Malone. . . . ¶ Aug. 25 at 6:30: "The Woman Next Door" (1981; in French), with Gérard Depardieu and Fanny Ardant. . . . ¶ Aug. 25 at 9: "Confidentially Yours" (1984; in French), with Fanny Ardant and Jean-Louis Trintignant. (Alice Tully Hall. For information about tickets, call 362-1911.)

Uris Center Auditorium, Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 81st St.—Aug. 24 at 2: "A Man for All Seasons" (1966; Fred Zinnemann), with Paul Scofield, Wendy Hiller, Robert Shaw, and Susannah York. . . . ¶ Aug. 27 at 6: "Beauty and the Beast" (1946; Jean Cocteau; in French), with Josette Day and Jean Marais. (For information about tickets, call 570-3764.)

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN THESE PAGES DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

Amadeus—The lofty playwright Peter Shaffer has the minor composer Salieri (F. Murray Abraham) declaring war on Heaven for gypping him, and determined to ruin the incomparable Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (Tom Hulce) because God's voice is speaking through him. The director, Miloš Forman, trudges through the movie as if every step were a major contribution to art, and he keeps the audience hooked. Some redeeming qualities: Mozart's music, Twyla Tharp's staging of the dances and opera excerpts, and Abraham's eager, slimy Salieri. (Reviewed in our issue of 10/29/84.) (Lincoln Plaza; through Aug. 22.)

Aparajito (1957)—The central film of Satyajit Ray's great Apu Trilogy is transitional in structure, rather than dramatic, yet it is full of insights and revelations. Ray takes the broken family of "Pather Panchali" from its medieval village life to the modern streets of Benares and follows the boy Apu in his encounter with the school system, and later, when he has left his mother, with the intellectual life at the University of Calcutta. The film chronicles the emergence of modern industrial India, showing it to be not a primitive society but a corrupted society. However, Apu himself embodies Ray's belief that individuals need not become corrupt. In Bengali. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; Aug. 25.)

Back to the Future—Directed by Robert Zemeckis, this piece of Pop Art Americana is a clever, generally engaging screwball comedy. Christopher Lloyd is the small-town crackpot inventor who builds a time machine, and Michael J. Fox is Marty, the seventeen-year-old high-school boy who is hurtled back thirty years to 1955, where his parents are seventeen-year-olds at the same school. The movie has the structure of a comedy classic, but it doesn't have the rambunctiousness or the maniacal edge; the thinking is cramped and conventional. With Lea Thompson and Crispin Glover. (7/29/85) (Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews New York Twin, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Loews State.)

Beverly Hills Cop—The plot is just a peg for little set pieces in which the street-smart Eddie Murphy, in his worn-out sweatshirts, saunters through swank Beverly Hills locations, tells whopping lies, and outsmarts the white dumbos. Hotfooting the picture to keep it going, he rattles off pitifully undistinguished profanity, but we're cued to react to every stupid four-letter word as riotous. With Judge Reinhold, Stephen Elliott, Bronson Pinchot, Ronny Cox, Steven Berkoff, Lisa Eilbacher, and John Ashton. Directed by Martin Brest. (12/24/84) (New Embassy 49th Street.)

The Caine Mutiny (1954)—Humphrey Bogart is Queeg, but the picture is trash. (Regency; Aug. 29-31.)

The Cincinnati Kid (1965)—Steve McQueen, Edward G. Robinson, and Ann-Margret in Norman Jewison's picture about cardsharps, which revels only in Ann-Margret's blood lust as she watches a cockfight. (Hollywood Twin Cinema 2; Aug. 26-27.)

Cocoon—A science-fantasy sitcom, in which the old people from a retirement community go off to the planet Antares, a Shangri-La in space. If audiences enjoy the movie, it's largely because of the elderly actors and the affection that the young director, Ron Howard, shows for them. But Howard keeps trying to extract tender emotions from scenes that could get by only as slapstick, and from scenes that can't get by as anything. The plot is less than ingenious, and things get pretty cloying. With Wilford Brimley, Don Ameche, Hume Cronyn, Jack Gilford, Maureen Stapleton, Gwen Verdon, Jessica Tandy, Herta Ware, Steve Guttenberg, Barret Oliver, and Brian Dennehy. (7/15/85) (Bay Cinema, Gotham Cinema, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Theatres.)

The Crowd Roars (1932)—The Howard Hawks version, not the later film of the same name with Robert Taylor. This one has James Cagney and Joan Blondell in a racing-driver tale made with the usual Hawks skill and unpretentious technical flair. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Aug. 29.)

Dames (1934)—Joan Blondell, plus Ruby Keeler and Dick Powell singing "I Only Have Eyes for You." Ray Enright directed. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Aug. 28.)

Dance with a Stranger—With Rupert Everett, Ian Holm, and Miranda Richardson; directed by Mike Newell. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Paris.)

The Desperate Hours (1955)—Joseph Hayes' adaptation of his play about three escaped convicts who invade the home of an Indianapolis businessman and make life hell for him and his family. An excellent melodrama, in which Humphrey Bogart and Fredric March distinguish themselves as, respectively, a psychopathic criminal and a shrewd,

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

decent householder. Directed by William Wyler. (Regency; Aug. 25-26.)

The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie (1972)—Luis Buñuel's most frivolously witty movie, directed (at the age of seventy-two) with exhilarating ease. It's a cosmic vaudeville show—an Old Master's mischief. This episodic story is about a group of six friends—discreetly charming, amoral beasts—whose attempts to have dinner together are always being interrupted: food, that ritual center of bourgeois well-being, keeps eluding them. Buñuel takes an offhand, prankish approach to the medium; he keeps tweaking us, catching us up in an anecdote or a spooky death joke, and then dropping it. With Stéphane Audran, Julien Bertheau, Fernando Rey, Delphine Seyrig, Jean-Pierre Cassel, Paul Frankeur, Bulle Ogier, Milena Vukotić, Claude Piéplu, and Michel Piccoli. In French. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Aug. 25. . . . ¶ Carnegie Hall Cinema; Aug. 30-31.)

Dr. Strangelove (1964)—Stanley Kubrick's fantastically bold and abusive comedy, starring Peter Sellers, George C. Scott, Sterling Hayden, Keenan Wynn, and Slim Pickens. (Cinema Village, Aug. 28-29.)

The Draughtsman's Contract (1983)—Set on an English estate in the summer of 1694, this formalist tease by the writer-director Peter Greenaway is a fantasia of conceits about perspective, and about the relationship between the artist, his art, and the world. It's also a victimization fantasy: the draughtsman (Anthony Higgins), a lover of landscape, is attacked and destroyed by those who love only property. The film is mannered and idiosyncratic, and the people talking are popinjays in perukes shaped as geometrically as the shrubs at Marienbad. This impishness congeals, because there's no dramatic motor in the sequences. With Janet Suzman and Anne Louise Lambert. (Hollywood Twin Cinema 2; Aug. 30-31.)

The Emerald Forest—John Boorman's theme is that civilized man, having lost tribal man's magic unity with nature, spreads his brutal, nature-destroying sickness. To put this across, Boorman sets his story in Brazil, where the seven-year-old son of an American engineer (played by Powers Boothe) is abducted by an Amazon rain forest tribe called the Invisible People. For ten years, the father searches for the boy in whatever time he can take off from his job of building a giant dam. When, at last, he locates his seventeen-year-old son (played by the director's son, Charley Boorman), he realizes that the boy's consciousness surpasses his own and that the boy's life is superior to anything civilization has to offer. And soon the father realizes that the dam is destroying the boy's tribe. The film touches on all sorts of major themes, especially the fate of the rain forests, but mostly it attempts to reëstablish the myth of the noble savage by imbuing it with hallucinogenic romanticism—trance visions, out-of-body travel, and all. It's a puerile movie. The faults that have plagued Boorman's films—his lack of interest in character, his rather lordly failure to dramatize the issues that excite him the most, his wacko ear for dialogue—really pile up this time, and he doesn't seem able to get any kind of seductive flow going. With Rui Polonah (as the shaman-chief), Meg Foster, Dira Paes, and Eduardo Conde. From a script by Rospo Pallenberg; cinematography by Philippe Rousselot. (8/12/85) (Embassy. . . . ¶ Cinema Studio; through Aug 22. . . . ¶ Cinema II; through Aug. 29.)

E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial (1982)—Steven Spielberg's movie is the story of a ten-year-old boy, Elliott, who feels fatherless and lost because his parents have separated, and who finds a miraculous friend—an alien inadvertently left on Earth by a visiting spaceship. This fusion of science fiction and mythology is emotionally rounded and complete; it reminds you of the goofiest dreams you had as a kid, and rehabilitates them. It puts a spell on the audience; it's genuinely entrancing. The stars are Henry Thomas, as Elliott, and E.T., who was designed by Carlo Rambaldi. With Drew Barrymore, Robert Macnaughton, Dee Wallace, and Peter Coyote. (Criterion Theatres.)

Le Fantôme de la Liberté (1974)—Buñuel's theme is freedom, in the sense of chance: the picture is a random series of anecdotes and paradoxes, and they miss as often as they connect. Buñuel has a great spare, tonic style, but the domesticated surrealism of this picture has no sting and no aftereffect. The film drifts out of your head before it's over. The actors come on in relays: the cast includes Monica Vitti, Jean-Claude Brialy, and Adriana Asti. In French. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Aug. 25.)

Flash Gordon (1980)—It's like a fairy tale set in a discothèque in the clouds. Up there, the archfiend Ming the Merciless (Max von Sydow) toys with Earth until three Earthlings—Dr. Zarkov (Topol), the golden-haired Flash Gordon (Sam J. Jones), and the cuddly Dale Arden (Melody Anderson)—go up in a rocket and crash-land at Ming's palace in Mongo. This picture has some of the knowing, pleasurable giddiness of the fast-moving Bonds. The director, Mike Hodges, gets right into comic-strip sensibility and pacing. With Brian Blessed, Ornella Muti, Timothy Dalton, Mariangela Melato, and John Osborne. (Hollywood Twin Cinema 2; Aug. 25.)

Ghostbusters (1984)—A scare comedy, with Bill Murray, Dan Aykroyd, and Harold Ramis as parapsychologists who try to save New York City from an influx of spooks. Murray is the film's comic mechanism: the more supernatural the situation, the more jaded his reaction. But nobody else has much in the way of material, and since there's almost no give-and-take among the three men, Murray's lines fall on dead air. Playing opposite Murray, Sigourney Weaver is a living zinger; when she stands talking to Murray, she's eye to eye with him and she looks vivid and indestructible. The cast includes Annie Potts, Rick Moranis, Ernie Hudson, William Atherton, and David Margulies. Directed by Ivan Reitman. (6/25/84) (Ziegfeld; starting Aug. 23.)

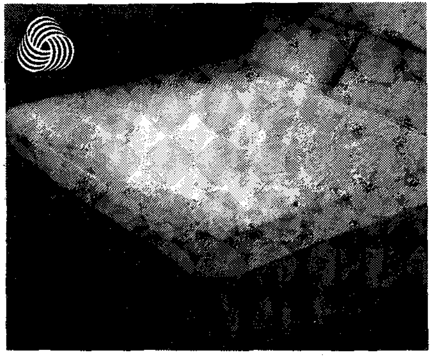
The Grey Fox (1983)—The story of a legendary gentleman bandit, Bill Miner (Richard Farnsworth), who served thirty-three years in San Quentin for robbing stagecoaches and then, when he got out, took up robbing trains. Farnsworth is a superb camera subject, with a lulling sexual presence, and he and Jackie Burroughs, who plays a red-haired suffragette, do some highly photogenic flirting. This is the first feature directed by the Canadian Phillip Borsos at twenty-seven, after a number of highly regarded documentaries. Borsos appears to have a dandy's approach to crime and social injustice, but he's an inspired imagemaker, and the film manages to be an art Western without making you hate it. (Hollywood Twin Cinema 2; Aug. 30-31.)

The Home and the World ("Ghare-Baire")—Victor Banerjee is a maharajah in Bengal with a Western education and liberal views. His wife (Swatilekha Chatterjee) is content to live in the women's quarters of his palace and be visible to no man except him. But he wants her to be a modern woman, and persuades her to leave the Arabian Nights cushions and the English bric-a-brac of the women's quarters, and she immediately becomes enthralled by the cocksure masculinity of a fiery radical (Soumitra Chatterjee). This Satyajit Ray movie is in deep, glowing colors; the main characters talk, and the camera just stays on them and waits until they finish, yet these conversations in golden light and shadows have their own kind of voltage. Set in 1907, this marvellous film is about the destruction of the marriage, and the riots and bloodshed caused by the radical's terrorist supporters. In Bengali. (7/1/85) (Quad Cinema; through Aug. 22.)

Ikiru (1952)—The last days of a Japanese Everyman (Takashi Shimura) doomed by cancer, as he explores the ways of confronting death. It's extremely uneven—there are slick and sentimental passages and some that are impenetrable. But there are also emotional revelations and there's a superb sequence—almost an epiphany—when the dying man, who has accomplished what he hoped to, sits in a swing in the snow and hums a little song. Directed by Akira Kurosawa. In Japanese. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; Aug. 29.)

Jimmy the Gent (1934)—We are watching a Michael Curtiz film of 1934, and Jimmy is James Cagney, so the gentlemanizing of Jimmy is fairly wry. It is done for the sake of Bette Davis, the eternal sadist; Cagney as her matching masochist is a funny idea. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Aug. 30-31.)

Kid Galahad (1937)—By 1937, Bette Davis had earned something better than the role of



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Fluff, girlfriend to a fight manager (Edward G. Robinson), but the movie was directed by Michael Curtiz, and though it has few dimensions it has pace and "entertainment value." Wayne Morris is the bellhop turned fighter, whom Fluff christens Kid Galahad; Humphrey Bogart is the bad guy; and Jane Bryan plays Robinson's sister. With Harry Carey and, for the finale, a Warners operatic shoot-out in which Robinson and Bogart kill each other. (Regency; Aug. 27-28.)

Kiss of the Spider Woman—With William Hurt and Raul Julia, directed by Hector Babenco. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Cinema I.)

The Little Theatre of Jean Renoir (1969)—A series of three sketches, each beginning on a magic-looking, red-swagged toy stage. The film was written and made by Renoir himself, with the director looming quizzically over the stage at the start of each episode as a sort of compere. The congenial, saddened, majestically revived temperament of the last story, which is about an old husband coping with a young wife and her young lover, has the nature of Renoir's "Rules of the Game." In French. (Thalia; Aug. 28.)

The Man Who Loved Women (1977)—The dedicated skirt-chaser of François Truffaut's film is meant to be irresistibly charming, but his compulsion looks to be about as exciting as building a two-foot replica of the Pentagon with toothpicks. With Charles Denner, Nelly Borgeaud, Brigitte Fossey, and Leslie Caron. Cinematography by Nestor Almendros; music by Maurice Jaubert. In French. (Festival; Aug. 25-27.)

The Men Who Tread on the Tiger's Tail (1945)—An hour-long film by Kurosawa. The Japanese government wanted a propaganda film when they commissioned him to film a popular Kabuki drama called "Kanjincho." What they got was a funny fable about militarism, with a nice low-comedy porter who upstages the stoic noblemen of the original. In Japanese. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; Aug. 29.)

Nazarin (1958)—The hero, Nazarin, is a gentle Mexican priest—a Candide who is robbed and cheated—in this simple, masterly, ambiguous film by Luis Buñuel, which is (perhaps in spite of his intention) his most tender. A woman offers Nazarin a pineapple and her blessing. Nazarin is so stubbornly proud that it's a struggle for him to accept, and Buñuel himself is so proud that he will hardly allow the scene to have any weight. Humility is very difficult for him; he just tosses in the pineapple. He's determined not to give in to the folly of tenderness, but it's there. With Francisco Rabal. In Spanish. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; Aug. 28.)

Pather Panchali (1954)—(Variously translated as "Song of the Road," "The Lament of the Path," etc.) This first film by the masterly Satyajit Ray is a quiet reverie about the life of an impoverished Brahman family in a Bengali village. Beautiful, sometimes funny, and full of love, it brought a new vision of India to the screen. Though the central characters are the boy Apu (who is born near the beginning) and his mother and father and sister, the character who makes the strongest impression on you may be the ancient, parasitic, storytelling relative, played by the eighty-year-old Chunibala. Ray continued the story of Apu in "Aparajito" and "The World of Apu," and the three films became known as the Apu Trilogy. In Bengali. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; Aug. 25.)

Picnic on the Grass (1959)—Jean Renoir, but at neither his best nor even his second best. His themes are reduced to crotchets in this story about a scientist (Paul Meurisse) who preaches artificial insemination until he catches sight of Catherine Rouvel bathing nude. In French. (Thalia; Aug. 28.)

Prizzi's Honor—This John Huston picture has a ripe and daring comic tone. It revels voluptuously in the murderous finagling of the members of a Brooklyn Mafia family, and rejoices in their scams. Jack Nicholson's average-guyness as Charley, the clan's enforcer, is the film's touchstone: this is a baroque comedy about people who behave in ordinary ways in grotesque circumstances. Everything in this picture works with everything else—which is to say that John Huston has it all in the palm of his big, bony hand. With William Hickey, Anjelica Huston, Kathleen Turner, and John Randolph. (7/1/85) (Greenwich Playhouse, Cinema 3, Cinema Studio, and Embassy.)

Rambo: First Blood Part II—Audiences hoot at it and get a little charged up at the same time. The proceedings are directed by George P. Cosmatos, and he gives the near-psychotic material a veneer of professionalism, but the looniness is always there. The film's star and progenitor is Sylvester Stallone, and the way he's photographed he's huge—our national palooka. This humanoid Christ figure with brown leather skin and symmetrical scars goes into Vietnam and brings out a bunch of our missing-in-action men. With Julia Nickson, Richard Crenna, and Charles Napier. (6/17/85) (Criterion Theatres. . . . ¶ Eastside Cinema; through Aug. 22.)

The Servant (1963)—A gentleman's gentleman reduces his gentleman to a state of squalid servitude. Dirk Bogarde is the brilliant star of the picture, which Joseph Losey directed. With Sarah Miles, Wendy Craig, and James Fox. (Bleecker St. Cinema; Aug. 26.)

The Shooting Party—Working with Julian Bond's adaptation of Isabel Colegate's novel and a dream of a cast—James Mason (in his final movie), John Gielgud, Dorothy Tutin, Edward Fox, Gordon Jackson, Cheryl Campbell, Judi Bowker, Rupert Frazer, Aharon Ipalé—the director Alan Bridges carries the Masterpiece Theatre approach to the level of art. In the English countryside in the autumn of 1913, a large number of landed gentry, aristocrats, servants, gamekeepers, beaters, and loaders gather for a three-day shoot. Colegate's tone is lightly self-mocking, and the film is full of the English affection for gentle lunacy. This is one of the rare movies that can be said to be for an educated audience without that being a putdown. As the host, an aging baronet who's conscious that he's losing his grip, Mason gives the film its immediacy. (6/17/85) (Quad Cinema.)

Silverado—The director, Lawrence Kasdan, uses accomplished actors: the four heroes journeying west to Silverado in the eighteen-eighties are played by Kevin Kline, Scott Glenn, Kevin Costner, and Danny Glover, and they're variously involved with Linda Hunt, Rosanna Arquette, Brian Dennehy, John Cleese, and Jeff Goldblum. But the atmosphere is arch and uninvolving, and these actors don't seem sure what their characters are meant to be. The film is like a homage to the expensive Western; it's so opulent it has a nouveau-riche aura about it. (7/29/85) (Coronet, and 23rd St. West Triplex. . . . ¶ Ziegfeld; through Aug. 22. . . . ¶ Embassy 1; starting Aug. 23.)

S.O.B. (1981)—A sour mixture of slapstick, cynicism, and sentimentality. Robert Preston covers his thick head of graying hair with glory in the role of a hearty, imperturbable Dr. Feelgood, who gives all-purpose injections; Larry Storch has a bright scene as a guru; and Richard Mulligan is involved in a few funny sight gags. He plays a producer who cracks up after his hugely expensive film starring his wife (Julie Andrews) opens and closes practically simultaneously; wandering about his Malibu home in a suicidal stupor, he sinks through a hole in the second-story bedroom floor that has been covered with a large rug and lands gracefully in the middle of an orgy. But Blake Edwards, who wrote and directed this broadside against Hollywood, uses a tired plot about turning the disastrous picture into a hit by having Julie Andrews bare her breasts. With William Holden, Marisa Berenson, Larry Hagman, Robert Loggia, Stuart Margolin, and Shelley Winters. (Hollywood Twin Cinema 2; Aug. 28-29.)

The Sorrow and the Pity (1970)—Magnificent documentary epic on the German Occupation of France. A study in the psychology of history, directed by Marcel Ophuls, it's both oral history and essay: people who lived through the German Occupation tell us what they did during that catastrophic period, and we see and hear evidence that corroborates or corrects or sometimes flatly contradicts them. What makes the film innovative is the immediate annotation of what has just been said. As the perspectives ramify, we begin to get a fuller sense of what it was like to participate in the moral drama of an occupied nation than we have ever before had. (4½ hours.) (Cinema Village; Aug. 25.)

Stolen Kisses (1968)—François Truffaut's first romantic comedy, and reasonably pleasant. With Jean-Pierre Léaud, Delphine Seyrig, and Claude Jade, and Michel Lonsdale as a man who hires detectives to find out why nobody likes him. In French. (Festival; Aug. 25-27.)

Things to Come (1936)—The most elaborate science-fiction movie ever made in England until "2001." H. G. Wells wrote the tendentious screenplay (based on his book "The Shape of Things to Come") and the celebrated designer William Cameron Menzies directed. Wells peers ahead through a century of devastation to the cold, abstract architecture of 2055. The whole "scientific" phantasmagoria is posh and modernistic—an amusingly dated view of the future. (It suggests the twenties.) The movie is more handsome than dramatic, with spacious sets and great costumes, and some wonderful howlers in Raymond Massey's and Ralph Richardson's dialogue and acting. With Cedric Hardwicke, John Clements, Ann Todd, Margaretta Scott, and Derrick de Marney. (Bleecker St. Cinema; Aug. 25.)

Trash (1970)—Absurdist porno-comedy about an impotent junkie (Joe Dallesandro) who drags himself around while various women try to arouse him. His sort-of-wife is played by a goofy female impersonator, Holly Woodlawn, whose intensity amidst the general dejection is crazily—and entertainingly—incongruous. The picture is steeped in a sense of grotesque parody; though most of the time it's as enervated and limp as its hero. This Andy Warhol production was directed by Paul Morrissey, who lingers over needles going into flesh and puts a nimbus around the messiest head of hair. With Jane Forth and Michael Sklar. (Festival; Aug. 28-29.)

The Virgin and the Gypsy (1970)—Maurice Denham is an Anglican vicar with a taste for depressing hymns; he sends one of his virgin daughters (Joanne Shimkus) into the arms of a gypsy (Franco Nero). Christopher Miles' movie is intelligent, a bit studied, true to D. H. Lawrence. (Bleecker St. Cinema; Aug. 26.)

Wonder Bar (1934)—A huge Warners musical with Al Jolson, Dick Powell, Dolores Del Rio, Kay Francis, Ricardo Cortez, and everybody else on the lot. Busby Berkeley did the choreography, and Harry Warren and Al Dubin wrote the songs, which include "Why Do I Dream Those Dreams?" and "Going to Heaven on a Mule." (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Aug. 28.)

The World of Apu (1959)—Satyajit Ray's protagonist, Apu, whose consciousness developed from the village life of "Pather Panchali" and the university in "Aparajito," marries the exquisite Sharmila Tagore and grows beyond self-consciousness. Rich and contemplative, and a great, convincing affirmation. The full-grown Apu is played by the remarkable Soumitra Chatterji, who starred in several other Ray films. In Bengali. (Carnegie Hall Cinema; Aug. 25.)

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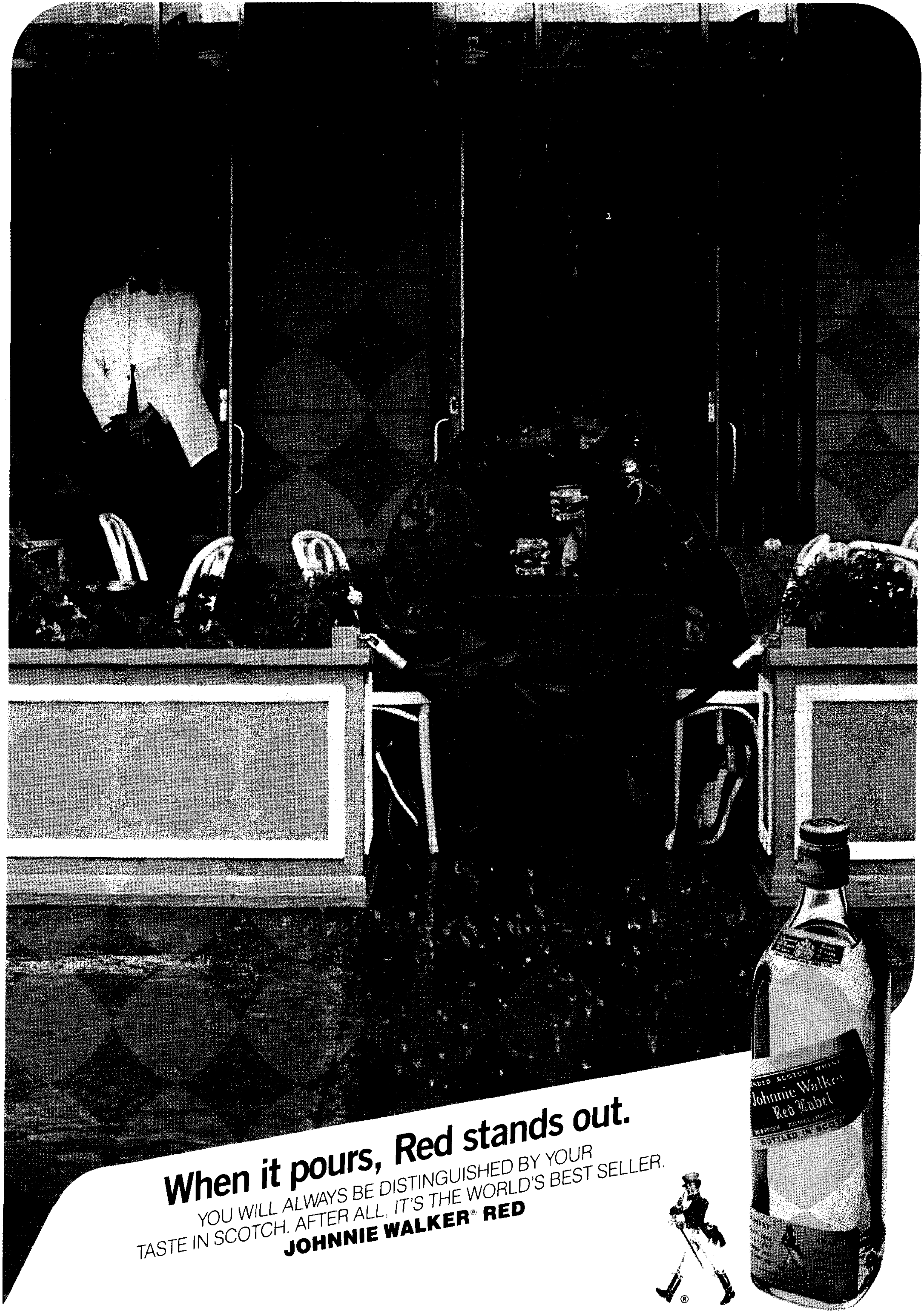

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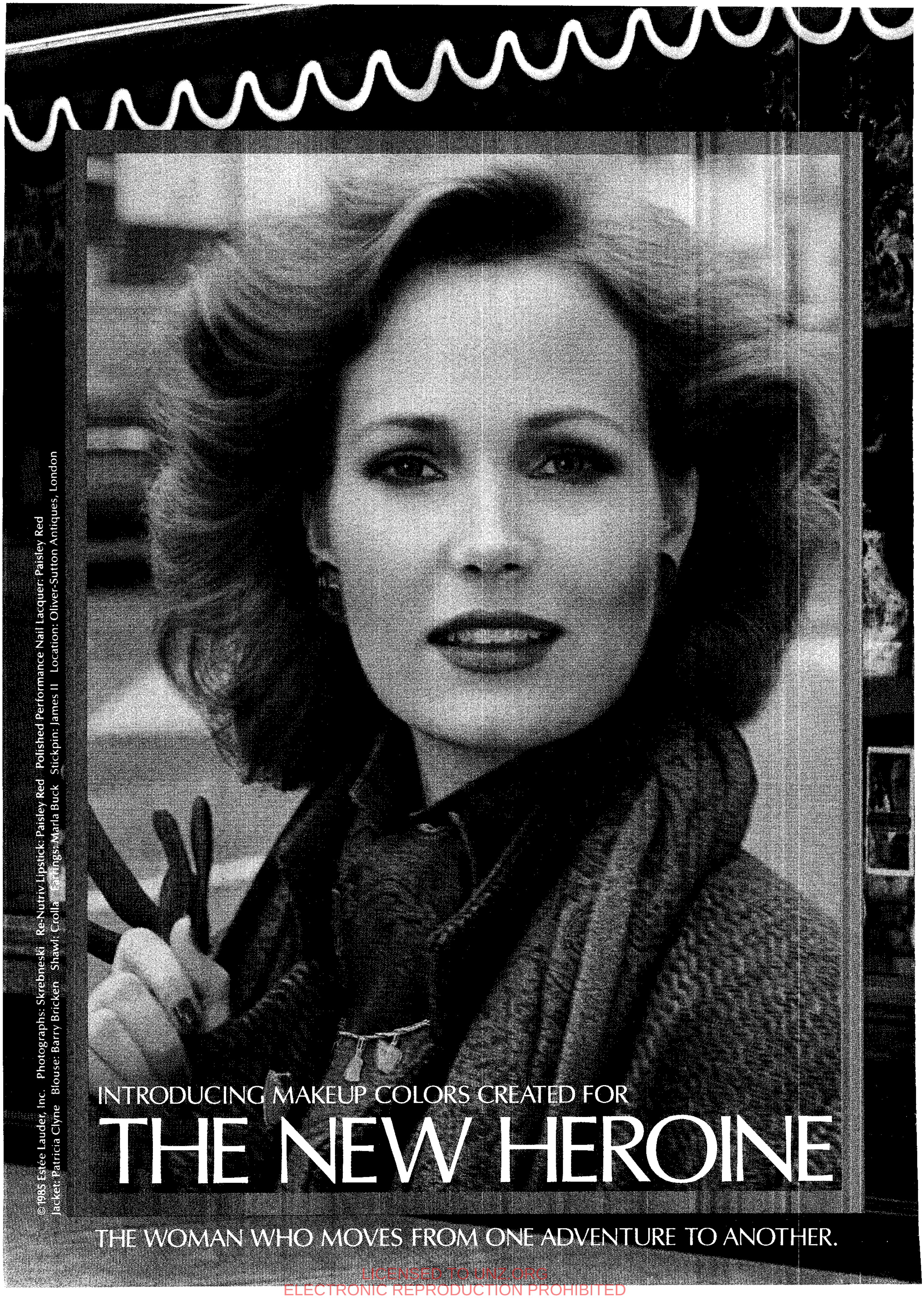
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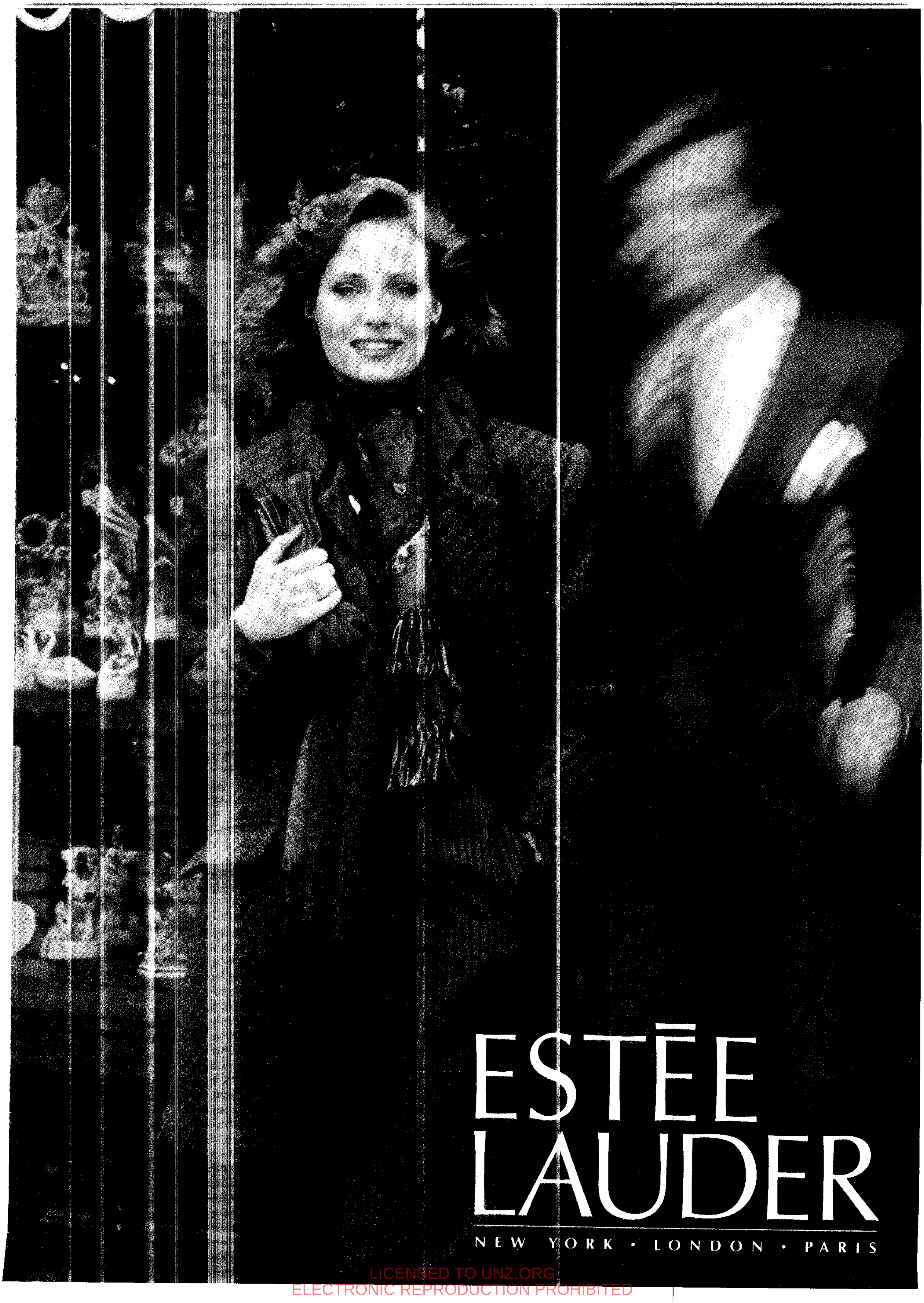
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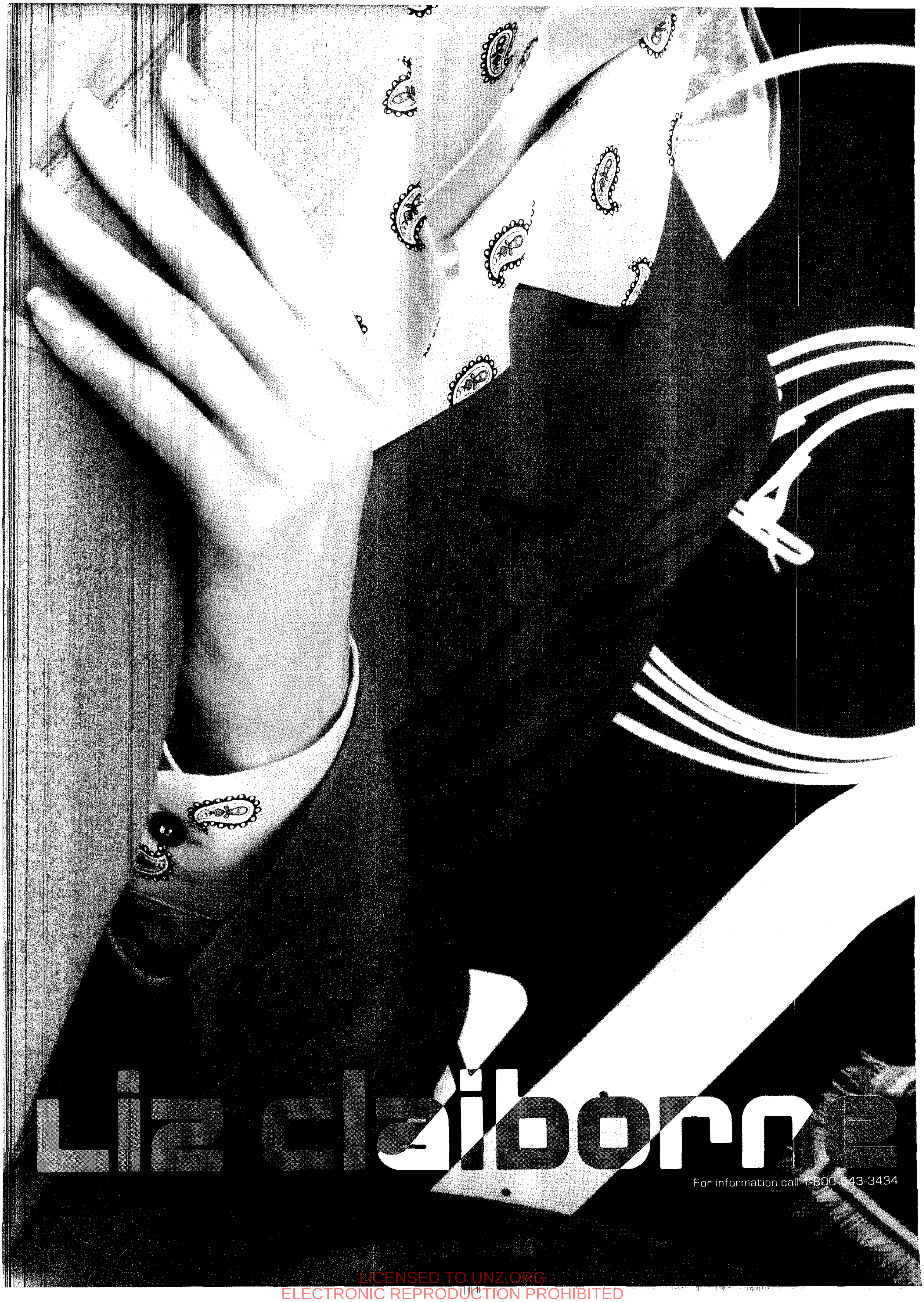
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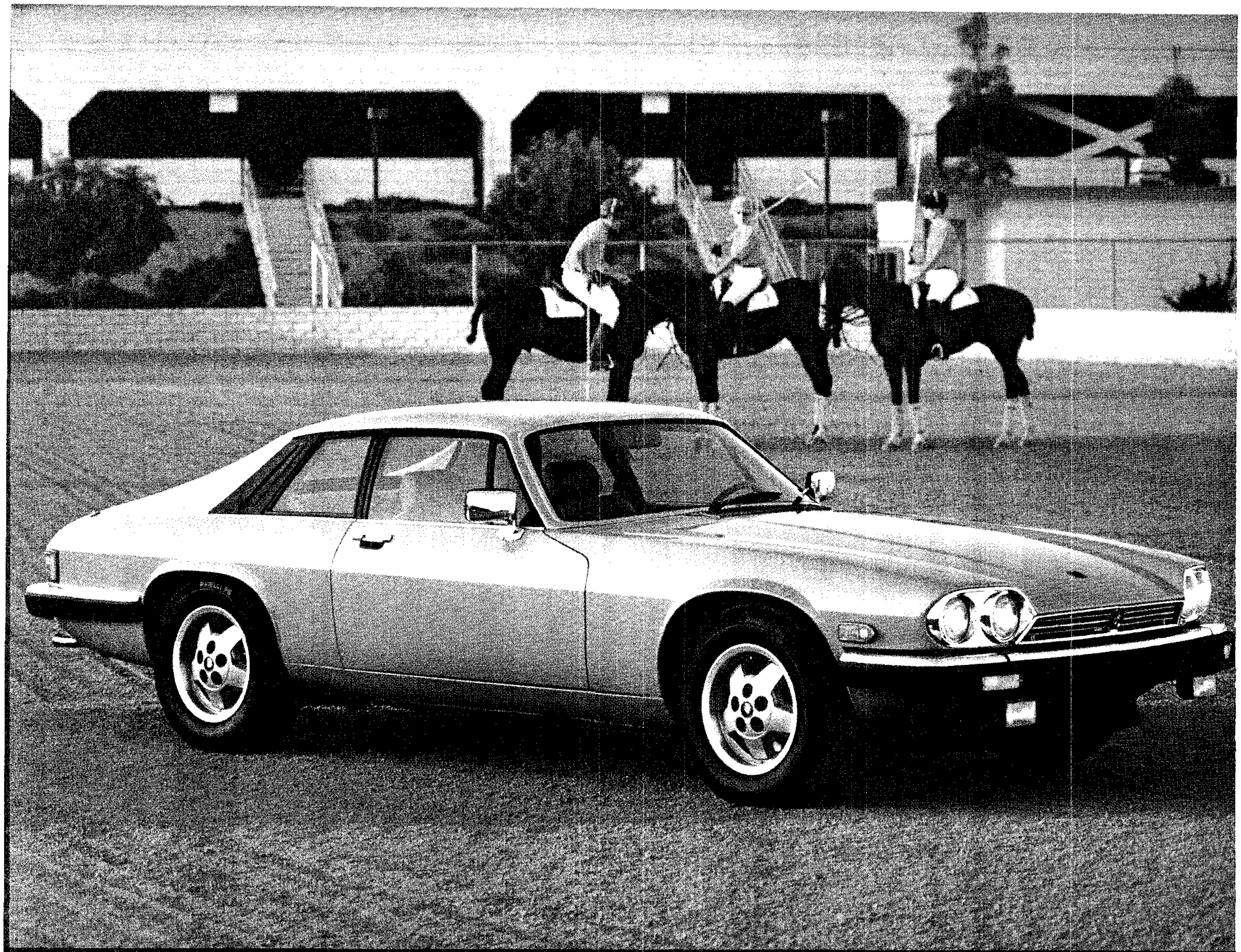

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

AT the checkout stand of a Greenwich Village grocery store, a middle-aged couple in tennis shoes, tan shorts, and blue polo shirts discussed the end of summer. The man, wearing a Mets cap, guessed that fall began on September 21st, but the woman, sporting a hat from Barney's Paint Shop, suggested that September 22nd was closer to the mark. The woman behind the register disagreed. "It's the twenty-third," she said. "That's when my Uncle Elmer got home from jail. My aunt said he planned it that way so he wouldn't have to weed the yard." Why, we wondered, hadn't these people understood that fall was already here? A lucky few, specially equipped, are able to keep autumn away until the Labor Day weekend: until Saturday evening, when the last gin-and-tonic has been drunk; until Sunday evening, when the sun has never looked so low in the sky so early in the day; until Monday morning, when "tomorrow" sounds like a threat. But for the rest of us fall comes earlier than that. It comes with the mail: with the reminders from the window cleaner who wants to remove the screens, from the gardener who wants to lay down the fertilizer, from the roofer and the furnace repairman, from the old man who sells firewood, from the mother-and-son team who unclog the gutters before the snow. It comes with the arrival of the Philharmonic tickets ordered last March, and the tuition bill, and the questionnaire from the school nurse. (No, we didn't have diphtheria this summer.) It comes at the nursery, when Mr. von Roth asks if we'll be wanting the usual number of bulbs this year. It comes in the Sunday papers, with the advertising supplement that announces a sale on loose-leaf filler and crayons. It comes through the air on the conversations of strangers planning doctors' appointments and business trips, college-football weekends, and the Thanksgiving Day guest list. Then we realize once again that a season is only loosely tethered to the sun, and a sharp gust chills us, a blast peculiar to a day in the middle of August.

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A YOUNG reporter we know writes:

Friends of mine sometimes ask me why I don't try my hand at writing a novel. They know that novels are just about all I read, or, at any rate, all I ever talk about, and they wonder why I don't try writing one myself. Fiction, they reason, should not be so difficult to compose if one already knows how to write nonfiction. It seems to me they ought to be right in that, and yet I can't *imagine* ever being able to write fiction. This complete absence of even the fantasy of my writing fiction used to trouble me. Or not trouble me, exactly—I used to wonder at it. But I gradually came to see it as one aspect of the constellation of capacities which makes it possible for me to write nonfiction. Or, rather, the other way around: the part of my sensibility which I demonstrate in nonfiction makes fiction an impossible mode for me. That's because for me the world is already filled to bursting with interconnections, interrelationships, consequences, and consequences of consequences. The world as it is is overdetermined: the web of all those interrelationships is dense to the point of saturation. That's what my reporting becomes about: taking any single knot and worrying out the threads, tracing the interconnections, following the mesh through into the wider, outlying mesh, establishing the proper analogies, ferreting out the false strands. If I were somehow to be forced to write a fiction about, say, a make-believe Caribbean island, I wouldn't know where to put it, because the Caribbean as it is is already full—there's *no room* in it for any fictional islands. Dropping one in there would provoke a tidal wave, and all other places would be swept away. I wouldn't be able to invent a fictional New York housewife, because the city as it is is already overcrowded—there are *no apartments available*, there is no more room in the phone book. (If, by contrast, I were reporting on the life of an actual housewife, all the

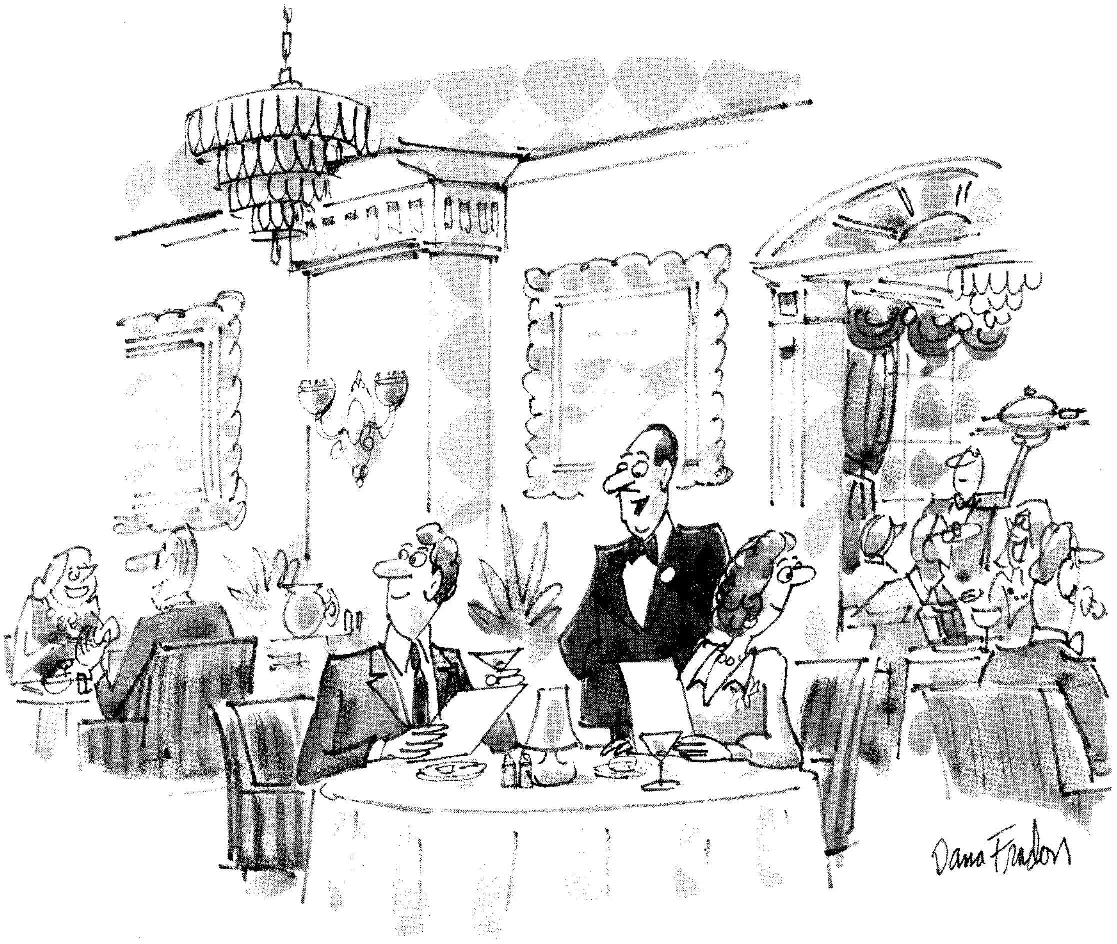
threads that *make up* her place in the city would become my subject, and I'd have no end of inspiration, no lack of room. Indeed, room—her specific space, the *way* the world makes room for her—would be my theme.)

It all reminds me of an exquisite notion advanced long ago by the Cabalists, the Jewish mystics, and particularly by those who subscribed to the teachings of Isaac Luria, the great, great visionary who was active in Palestine in the mid-sixteenth century. The Lurianic Cabalists were vexed by the question of how God could have created *anything*, since He was already everywhere and hence there could have been no room anywhere for His creation. In order to approach this mystery, they conceived the notion of *tsimtsum*, which means a sort of holding in of breath. Luria suggested that at the moment of creation God, in effect, breathed in—He absented Himself; or, rather, He hid Himself; or, rather, He entered into Himself—so as to make room for His creation. This *tsimtsum* has extraordinary implications in Lurianic and post-Lurianic teaching. In a certain sense, the *tsimtsum* helps account for the distance we feel from God in this fallen world. Indeed, in one version, at the moment of creation something went disastrously wrong, and the Fall was a fall for God as well as for man: God Himself is wounded; He can no longer put everything back together by Himself; He needs man. The process of salvation, of restitution—the *tikkun*, as Luria called it—is thus played out in the human sphere, becomes at least in part the work of men in this world. Hence, years and years later, we get Kafka's remarkable and mysterious assertion that "the Messiah will come only when he is no longer needed; he will come only on the day after his arrival; he will come not on the last day but on the very last."

But I digress. For me, the point here is that the creativity of the fiction writer has always seemed to partake of the mysteries of the First Creation (I realize that this is an oft-broached analogy)—the novelist as creator, his characters as his creatures. (See, for example, Robert Coover's marvellous "The Universal Baseball Association, Inc., J. Henry Waugh, Prop.," in which for "J. Henry Waugh" read "Jahweh.") The fictionalist has to be capable of *tsimtsum*, of breathing in, of allowing—paradoxically, of creating—an empty space in the world, an empty time, in which his characters will be able to play out their fates. This is, I suppose, the active form of the "suspension of disbelief." For some reason, I positively relish suspending my disbelief as long as someone else is casting the bridge across the abyss; I haven't a clue to how to fashion, let alone cast, such a bridge myself.

All these thoughts have come to the fore for me just now on account of my recent summer reading. Larry McMurtry, one of my favorite novelists, has a big new novel out, the epic that all of us McMurtry fans have been hearing rumors about for years. It's called "Lonesome Dove;" it basically concerns a cattle drive from southernmost Texas all the way to the highlands of Montana back in the late eighteen-seventies, around the time Montana was beginning to be made safe for settling (or, actually, as the novel reveals, it was at precisely this time that brash exploits by characters such as these were going to make that north country safe for settling, although it sure as hell wasn't yet); and it's a wonderful book. McMurtry's ongoing capacity for fashioning fully living characters—filled with contradictions and teeming with fellow-feeling—is in full bloom here; he's created dozens of them, and he's managed to keep them all vividly distinct. Reading the book, one begins to think of the novelist himself as trail driver, guiding and prodding his characters along: some tarry; others bolt and, after a long, meandering chase, have to be herded back into the main herd; others fall out and stay behind; still others just die off. Why does he, I marvel—how *can* he—keep driving them along like that, from the lazy, languid Rio Grande cusp of Chapter 1 to the awesome Montana highlands past page 800? In many ways, McMurtry strikes me as not unlike his character Captain Call, the leader of the drive, who *just does it*, and keeps on

"Suède says 'Back off.'"



"Tonight's specials are coq au vin Pierre, caviar omelette with mushrooms and truffles, and fresh brook trout. Tonight's celebrities to ogle are Senator Bill Bradley, Joan Collins, Mookie Wilson, Ted Turner, and Jeane Kirkpatrick."

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doing it as, one by one, all conceivable motivations and rationales slip away. And yet, unlike Call, McMurtry seems overflowing with empathy for every one of his creatures—a lavishment of love which makes his ability, his negative capacity, to then just let them go (after lavishing so much compassion in the fashioning of them), to just let them drift into ever more terrible demises—all the more remarkable.

I have so many questions I'd like to ask McMurtry about how he does it. But he wouldn't much cotton to my coming around and asking them. I know; I tried once. McMurtry lives part of the time in Washington, D.C., these days, where he runs a rare-book emporium in Georgetown. I remember, about five years ago, arriving by train at Union Station and looking up the store's name in the phone book and calling the number on a pay phone and asking the answering male voice whether Mr. McMurtry was in and being told yes, it was he speaking. I said, "Great, don't move, I'll be right over." I hailed a taxi and was there in less than ten minutes. I started out pouring forth praise and appreciation and heartfelt readerly thanks, and then headed into my few questions. And all the while he stared back at me, completely indifferent. The sheer extent of his indifference was terrifying. I ended up stammering some sort of gaga apology and bolting.

A few weeks ago, two of McMurtry's more recent novels were reissued in paperback—timed, I suppose, to coincide with the hardcover publication of "Lonesome Dove." They included new prefaces, and these prefaces helped me to appreciate the icy reluctance to talk about his own writing with which he'd greeted me that day. "I rarely think of my own books, once I finish them," he records in the preface to "Cadillac Jack," "and don't welcome the opportunity, much less the necessity, of thinking about them. The moving finger writes, and keeps moving; thinking about them while I'm writing them is often hard enough." In the preface to "The Desert Rose" he plays a variation on this theme: "Once I finish a book, it vanishes from my mental picture as rapidly as the road runner in the cartoon. I don't expect to see it or think about it again for a decade or so, if ever." But those prefaces nevertheless suggest the contours of some answers to the sorts of questions I wanted to ask: questions about creators and creatures, free will and determinism—finally, I guess, about grace. At one point, he writes about the way one of his characters, Harmony, in "The Desert Rose," "graced" his life during the time he was writing about her. (That's a good, an exact, word; I remember how she graced my life, too, as I read about her.) "In my own practice," he notes, "writing fiction has always seemed a semiconscious activity. I concentrate so hard on visualizing my characters that my actual surroundings blur. My characters seem to be speeding through their lives—I have to type unflaggingly in order to keep them in sight." Later, he records that he was "rather sorry," as he finished the book's composition, when Harmony "strolled out of hearing."

Characters stroll out of hearing all the time in "Lonesome Dove," and strolling's not the half of it. They lurch, career, and smash out of hearing: they get snakebitten, drowned, hanged, gangrened, struck by lightning, bow-and-arrowed. The untamed West of "Lonesome Dove" is a tremendously dangerous wilderness. McMurtry offers a luminous epigraph to his epic, some lines from T. K. Whipple's "Study Out the Land": "All America lies at the end of the wilderness road, and our past is not a dead past, but still lives in us. Our forefathers had civilization inside themselves, the wild outside. We live in the civilization they created, but within us the wilderness still lingers. What they dreamed, we live, and what they lived, we dream.” It occurs to me that as a reader I stand in somewhat the same relationship to McMurtry as that which Whipple suggests obtains between us and our forebears. Here McMurtry has gone and done it—created this tremendous epic massif. All the while, as he was doing it, he must have been envisioning us someday reading this epic; and now we, as we read it—or, anyway, I, as I read it—try to imagine what it was like for him doing it, making it, living through the writing of it. And the thing I keep wondering about, in my clumsy, gawky fashion, is this: Did he, too, feel the sorrow, the poignant melancholy, that he engenders in us as, one by one, he disposed of those, his beloved characters; or was he able merely to glory in the craft of it, the polish, the shine? Are they—his characters—more or less real for him than they are for us?

Post-Aspen

“A LOT of laughs,” “Brought the house down,” “Most of them were crazy about me”: these are some excerpts from Janet’s review of her performance as a fellow at the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies. We were sitting in her apartment watching her ransack the bedroom. “What I’ve done is lost some very important checks!” she shouted over the morning news on TV.

We turned down the volume.

“You shouldn’t hide things where you can’t find them. Know anybody who would like this?” She pulled a yarmulke out of the top drawer of the dresser. “This is pretty terrible. I’ve lost those checks. Have I told you about Aspen?”

We said no.

“The moderator chose me to be the director of ‘Antigone.’ I cut out all the parts I didn’t understand, the parts referring to what happened to the family before the play started—the grandparents sleeping with each other, the dismal past. We called it the *Reader’s Digest* version. But I had cut out the whole meaning of the play, so we had to put some lines back. ‘Antigone’ was originally written as a tragedy, but we got a lot of laughs.” Janet reached into a shopping bag and handed us a manuscript. “This is my condensed version of ‘The Visit,’ by Dürrenmatt,” she said. “ ‘The Visit Revisited.’ I wrote it for the last night, which is for entertaining each other.”

We read:

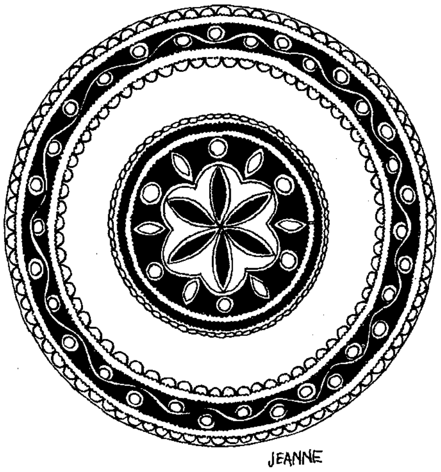
VILLAGERS: We’re dead broke.
CLAIRE: How would you like to make a million dollars?
VILLAGERS: That would be nice.

“One guy played the Villagers,” Janet said. “The moderator got an appendix attack the second week and had to be taken to the hospital, and a serious woman took charge. Her name was Dorothy, but I’ll call her Lillian. I said, ‘I think I’m being disruptive.’ ‘As long as you’re aware of it,’ she said to me. I drifted away from the subject at hand.” Janet held up what looked like a knee-length sweatshirt, and studied herself in the mirror. “In the middle of the discussion of Lycurgus, I’d say something like ‘The Reagan Administration is rotten,’ which would infuriate all the corporate executives. I can’t believe I bought this; it makes me look like a white hippopotamus. The I.B.M. man could have been brought up in Sparta in Lycurgus’s time. The A.T. & T. man said he wanted to own a gold Rolls-Royce and after that he would care about the poor. They were competitive about compassion.”

We read:

CLAIRE: O.K. Kill him.
VILLAGERS: You want us to kill him for money?

“I’ve got to find those checks,” Janet said. “I once got a call from the Department for the Aging. ‘Have you lost anything?’ they asked me. ‘I’ve lost everything,’ I said. It turned out that I had only lost my wallet. I didn’t go skiing at Aspen, out of consideration for the other participants. I thought, If I break a leg at my age, it takes two years to heal. I do have a lot of ski clothes, in case you need mittens or a hot hat-and-scarf set, which I may give to my sister-in-law for Christmas.”



We continued reading:

CLAIRE: You hit it right on the nose!

Janet emptied a black briefcase onto the floor. “One of the most shocking things that happened to me was catching a Conservative smoking pot,” she said. “It was a very diverse group—fifteen people and three wives who weren’t allowed to say anything. One of them took copious notes. We each got an assignment—you read something and then you try to explain it, what it means to you. I did my dissertation on— Wait a minute.” Janet put on her glasses and consulted one of the books in a pile at the foot of the bed. “It’s called ‘A Declaration of Interdependence,’ by Henry Steele Commager,” she said. “I was extremely lucid, and impressed the whole class. The I.B.M. man was given Communism. He told me that if he were going to hire anybody at the seminar—what did he say?—the two people he would hire would be this Socialist girl and this brilliant trickle-down writer. He’s not hiring anybody, though.”

The telephone rang, and while Janet answered it we finished reading her play:

ANTON: I think I’ll get out of here.
VILLAGERS: Listen, he was lousy to her forty years ago.
ANTON: My God! It was forty years ago?
VILLAGERS: Oh what the hell, let’s kill him!
CLAIRE: That’s over. Here’s your dough.
VILLAGERS: Thanks a million!

“Being the confidante of the rich and powerful is very upsetting,” Janet said when she hung up. She reached under the bed. “I thought I’d continue my quest for knowledge after I got back,” she said. “I thought I’d keep on reading all this hard stuff. But I didn’t. You want to know what kind of stuff I read?”

We wanted to know.

She handed us a catalogue. “This—catalogues. Banana Republic—it’s got wonderful stuff in it for the jungle. I’m on a list where I get every single catalogue. I have huge mounds of catalogues that I don’t dare throw out.” She reached under the bed again, and held up a wooden spoon and a rack. “Here’s something I sent for from Save the Children. I hope I saved some children with this, but I don’t know what it is. I’ve had it so long that the spoon got sticky, and I haven’t even used it. I'm planning to call up Save the Children and ask what it is. I forgot to mention the Army colonel—John. He had a Southern accent and an open mind. My mind could be better described as empty than open. He did wipe out a lot of prejudice against the Army, although the only people who were prejudiced were the Socialist and me."

Janet was searching the dresser again. "I've decided to be a burden to my children," she said. "That's the only way to solve what happens after a certain age. Oh, here they are. I found the checks. Guess where I put them."

We couldn't guess.

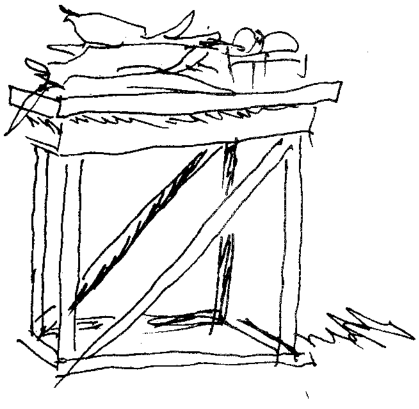
"Right here, under the clock. O.K., now. I'm going to put a Band-Aid on and start my day."

We put the manuscript of "The Visit Revisited" under the clock.

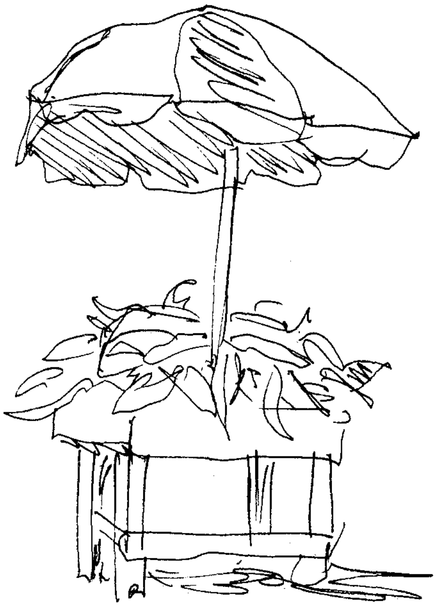
"The last day I was there," Janet said, "the man who runs the whole thing called me aside and said, 'Janet, may I ask you a question?' I said, 'Sure.' He said, 'How did you get here?' "

Roadside

"KEEP it simple," said Arugula C. Kale, the Frank Lloyd Wright of roadside vegetable stands. "You don't have to build Versailles in order to sell broccoli." By and large, stand designers along the roads of Long Island and New England have followed Kale's precepts—"Get the stuff out where the tourists can see it, and maybe stick a roof over it," he used to say—but there has been a good deal of innovation since the grand old man's unfortunate demise. (Kale was driving an open convertible past his beloved potato fields of Sagaponack when he rear-ended a dump truck carrying six tons of Brussels sprouts.) Travellers can still see the minimal classic Down Home (*Illus. A*) and its variant, the shady Légumes à la Plage (*Illus. B*), but a tendency toward the ornate is visible in Venetian (*Illus. C*), of eastern Connecticut, with its striped awning. The Greco-Gothic (*Illus. D*), near New Haven, features a single flying buttress attached to the basic Greek temple, which contains, kangaroolike, a second display unit (this one on wheels). The Barnum & Bailey (*Illus. E*) is the K Mart of produce. The Onionmobile (*Illus. F*), observed near Greenport, Long Island, is obviously designed for maximum maneuverability, and is ready for any emergency, including an onion-evacuation order. The red-white-and-blue Patriotic Rhubarb (*Illus. G*), not far from Riverhead, may not be simple, but its dramatic blend of canvas, rope, chain, plywood, tree trunks, and Americanism causes passersby to hit the brakes. In the horticultural division, the design closest to Kale's heart would be the Gladiola (*Illus. H*), seen at the edge of a Connecticut lawn—an upturned milk box with a coffee can to hold the flowers.



Illus. A



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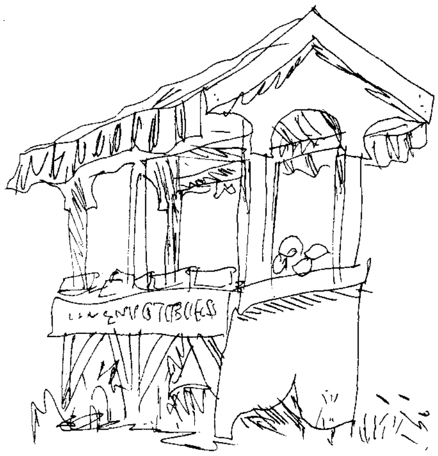
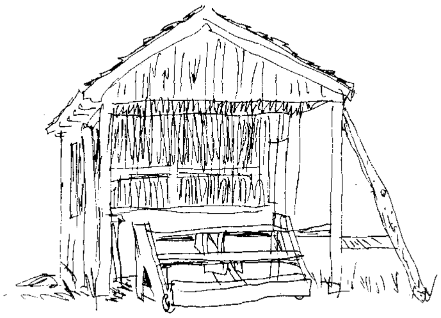


Illus. C



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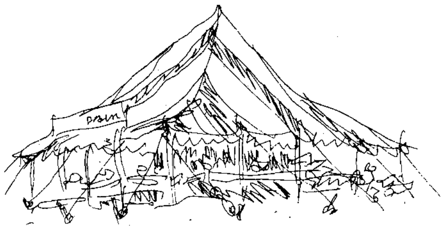

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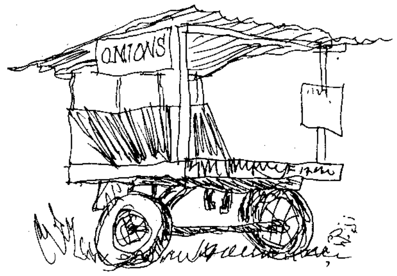

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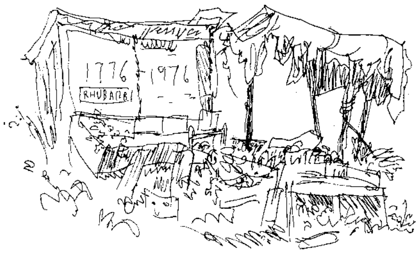
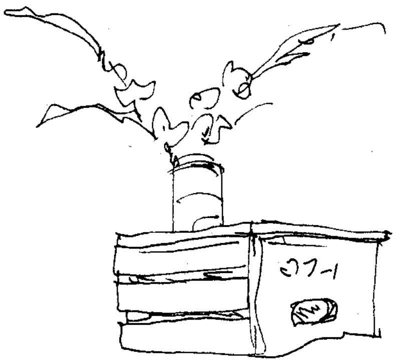


Illus. G



Illus. H

FLORIDA

Berthe Carette's sister Marie spent eight Christmases of her life in Florida, where her son was establishing a future in the motel industry. Every time Marie went down she found Raymond starting over in a new place: his motels seemed to die on his hands. She used to come back to Montreal riddled with static electricity. Berthe couldn't hand her a teaspoon without receiving a shock, like a small silver bullet. Her sister believed the current was generated by a chemical change that occurred as she flew out of Fort Lauderdale toward a wet, dark, snowy city.

Marie had been living with Berthe ever since 1969, the year her husband died. She still expected what Berthe thought of as husband service: flights met, cabs hailed, doors held, tips attended to. Berthe had to take the bus out to Dorval Airport, with Marie's second-best fur coat over her arm and her high-heeled boots in a plastic bag. Through a glass barrier she could watch her sister gliding through customs, dressed in a new outfit of some sherbet tone—strawberry, lemon-peach—with everything matching, sometimes even her hair. She knew that Marie had been careful to tear the American store and union labels out of the clothes and sew in Canadian ones, in case customs asked her to strip.

"Don't tell me it's still winter," Marie would wail, kissing Berthe as if she had been away for months rather than just a few days. Guiding Marie's arms into the second-best-mink sleeves (paws and piecework), Berthe would get the first of the silvery shocks.

One year, when her son Raymond had fallen in love with a divorced woman twice his age (it didn't last), Marie arrived home crackling, exchanging sparks with everything she touched. When she ate a peppermint she felt it detonating in her mouth. Berthe had placed a pot of flowering paper-white narcissi on Marie's dressing table, a welcome-home present reflected on and on in the three mirrors. Marie shuffled along the carpeted passage, still in her boots. She had on her Florida manner, pretending she was in Berthe's flat by mistake. As soon as she saw the plant, she went straight over and gave it a kiss. The flower absorbed a charge and hurled it back. Berthe examined the spot on Marie's lip where the shock had struck. She could find nothing, no trace. Nevertheless Marie applied an ice cube.

She waited until midnight before calling Raymond, to get the benefit of the lower rate. His line was tied up until two: he said the police had been in, investigating a rumor. Marie told about the plant. He made her repeat the story twice, then said she had built up a reserve of static by standing on a shag rug with her boots on. She was not properly grounded when she approached the flower.

"Raymond could have done more with his life," said Marie, hanging up. Berthe, who was still awake, thought he had done all he could, given his brains and character. She did not say so: she never mentioned her nephew, never asked about his health. He had left home young, and caused a lot of grief and trouble.

On Marie's eighth visit, Raymond met her at the airport with a skinny woman he said was his wife. She had dark-blond hair and one of those unset permanents, all corkscrews. Marie looked at her, and looked away. Raymond explained that he had moved back to Hollywood North. Marie said she didn't care, as long as she had somewhere to lay her head.

They left the terminal in silence. Outside, she said, "What's this car? Japanese? Your father liked a Buick."

"It belongs to Mimi," he said.

Marie got in front, next to Raymond, and the skinny woman climbed in behind. Marie said to Raymond, in French, "You haven't told me her name."

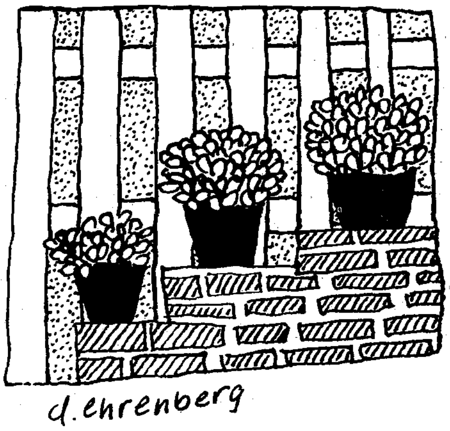
"Well, I have, of course. I introduced you. Mimi."

"Mimi isn't a name."

"It's hers," he said.

"It can't be. It's always short for something—for Michèle. Did you ever hear of a Saint Mimi? She's not a divorced woman, is she? You were married in church?"

"In a kind of church," he said. "She belongs to a Christian movement."



Marie knew what that meant: pagan rites. "You haven't joined this thing—this movement?"

"I don't want to join anything," he said. "But it has changed my life."

Marie tried to consider this in an orderly way, going over in her mind the parts of Raymond's life that wanted changing. "What sort of woman would marry an only son without his mother's blessing?" she said.

"Mom," said Raymond, switching to English, and perhaps forgetting she hated to be called this. "She's twenty-nine. I'm thirty-three."

"What's her maiden name?" said Marie.

"Ask her," he said. "I didn't marry her family."

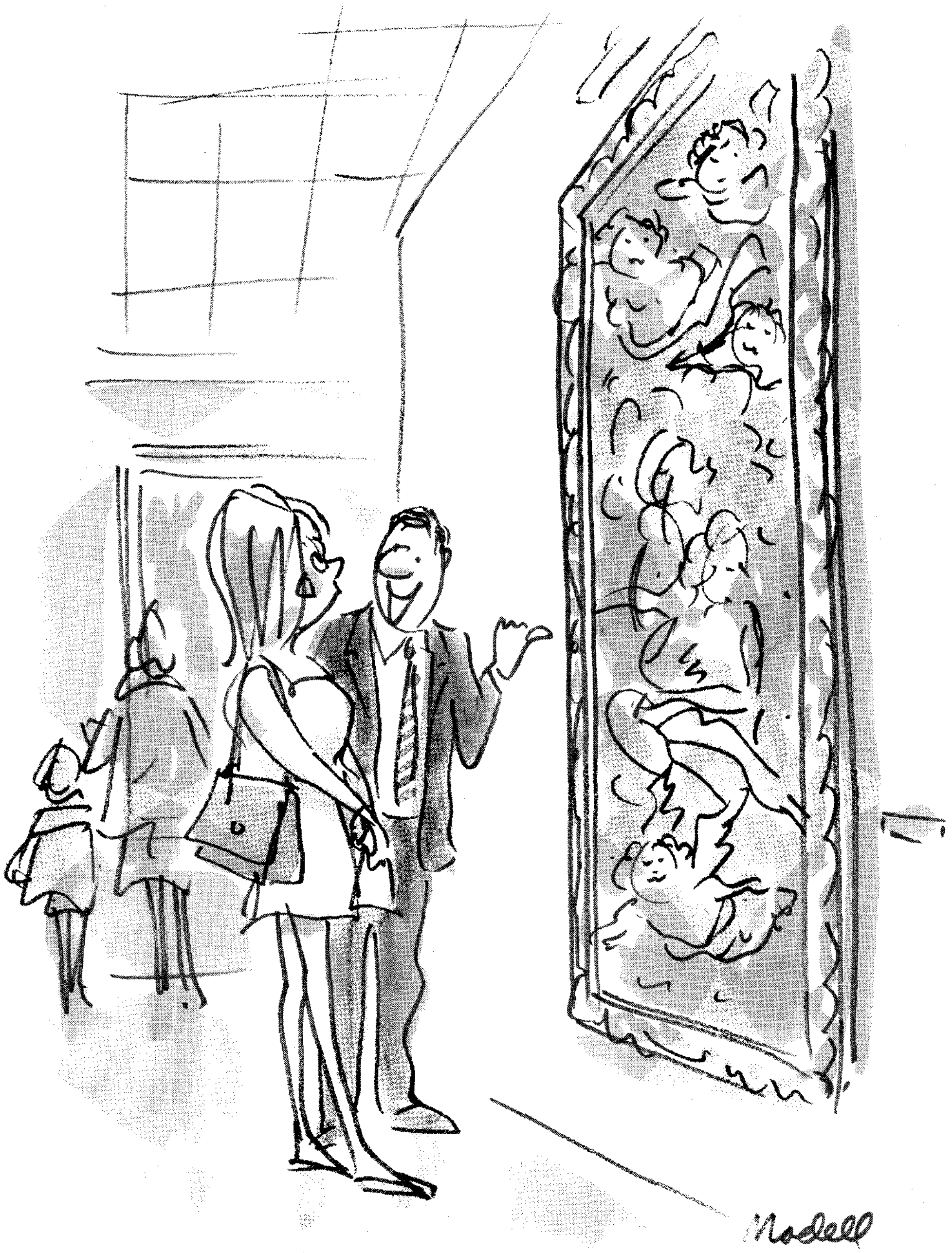
Marie eased the seat belt and turned around, smiling. The woman had her eyes shut. She seemed to be praying. Her skin was freckled, pale for the climate; perhaps she had come to one of the oases of the heart where there are no extremes of weather. As for Raymond, he was sharp and dry, with a high, feverish forehead. His past had evaporated. It annoyed him to have to speak French. On one of his mother's other visits he had criticized her Montreal accent, said he had heard better French in the streets of Saigon. He lit a cigarette, but before she could say, "Your father died of emphysema," threw it out.

Mimi, perhaps made patient by prayer, spoke up: "I am happy to welcome any mother of Raymond's. May we spend a peaceful and mutually enriching Christmas." Her voice moved on a strained, single note, like a soprano recitative. Shyness, Marie thought. She stole a second look. Her eyes, now open, were pale blue, with stubby black lashes. She seemed all at once beguiling and anxious, hoping to be forgiven before having mentioned the sin. A good point, but not good enough to make her a Catholic.

Raymond carried Marie's luggage to a decent room with cream walls and tangerine curtains and spread. The motel looked clean and prosperous, but so had the others. Mimi had gone off on business of her own. ("I'm feeling sick," she had said, getting out of the car, with one freckled hand on her stomach and the other against her throat.)

"She'll be all right," he told Marie.

Alone with Marie, he called her *Maman*, drew her to the window,



"That's one hell of a painting, isn't it?"

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showed her a Canadian flag flying next to the Stars and Stripes. The place was full of Canadians, he said. They stole like raccoons. One couple had even made off with the bathroom faucets. "Nice-looking people, too."

"Your father never ran down his own kind," said Marie. She did not mean to start an argument but to point out certain limits. He checked the towels, counted the hangers, raised (or lowered, she could not tell) the air-conditioning. He turned his back while she changed into her hibiscus-pattern chiffon, in case they were going out. In a mirror he watched her buckling her red sandals. Berthe's Christmas present.

"Mimi is the first woman I ever met who reminded me of you," he said. Marie let that pass. They walked arm in arm across the parking lot, and he pointed out different things that might interest her—Quebec license plates, a couple of dying palms. On the floor of the lobby lay a furled spruce tree, with its branches still tied. Raymond prodded the tree with his running shoe. It had been here for a week, he said, and it was already shedding. Perhaps Marie and Mimi would like to trim it.

"Trim it with what?" said Marie. Every year, for seven years, she had bought decorations, which Raymond had always thrown out with the tree.

"*I* don't know," he said. "Mimi wants me to set it up on a mirror."

Marie wondered what Raymond's title in this place might be. "Manager," he'd said, but he and Mimi lived like caretakers in an inconvenient arrangement of rooms off the lobby. To get to their kitchen, which was also a storage place for beer and soft drinks, Marie had to squeeze behind the front desk. Every door had a peephole and chain lock. Whenever a bell rang in the lobby Raymond looked carefully before undoing the lock. Another couple worked here, too, he explained, but they were off for Christmas.

The three ate dinner in the kitchen, hemmed in by boxes and crates. Marie asked for an apron, to protect her chiffon. Mimi did not own one, and seemed astonished at the request. She had prepared plain shrimp and boiled rice and plain fruit salad. No wonder Raymond was drying up. Marie showed them pictures of Berthe's Christmas tree, this year red and gold.

Mimi looked for a long time at a snapshot of Berthe, holding a glass, sitting with her legs crossed and her skirt perhaps a bit high. "What's in the glass?" she said.

"Gin does my sister a lot of good," said Marie. She had not enjoyed her shrimp, washed down with some diet drink.

"I'm surprised she never got married," said Mimi. "How old is she? Fifty-something? She still looks good, physically and mentally."

"I am surprised," said Marie, in French. "I am surprised at the turn of this conversation."

"Mimi isn't criticizing Aunt Berthe," said Raymond. "It's a compliment."

Marie turned to Mimi. "My sister never had to get married. She's always made good money. She buys her own fur coats."

Mimi did not know about Berthe, assistant office manager at Prestige Central Burners—a multinational with tentacles in two cities, one of them Cleveland. Last year Mr. Linden from the Cleveland office had invited Berthe out to dinner. His wife had left him; he was getting over the loss. Berthe intended to tell him she had made a lifetime commitment to the firm, with no leftover devotion. She suggested the Ritz-Carlton—she had been there once before, and had a favorite table. During dinner they talked about the different ways of cooking trout, and the bewildering architectural changes taking place in Cleveland and Montreal. Berthe mentioned that whenever a landmark was torn down people said, "It's as bad as Cleveland." It was hard to reconcile the need for progress with the claims of tradition. Mr. Linden said that tradition was flexible.

"I like the way you think," he said. "If only you had been a man, Miss Carette, with your intellect, and your powers of synthesis, you might have gone . . .," and he pointed to the glass bowl of blueberry trifle on the dessert trolley, as if to say, "even farther."

The next day Berthe drew on her retirement savings account and made a down payment on a mink coat (pastel, fully let out) and wore the coat to work. That was her answer. Marie admired this counterstroke more than any feat of history. She wanted Mimi to admire it, too, but she was tired after the flight, and the shock of Raymond's marriage, and the parched, disappointing meal. Halfway through the story her English thinned out.

"What's she saying?" said Mimi. "This man gave her a coat?"

"It's too bad it couldn't have worked out better for Aunt Berthe," said Raymond. "A widower on the executive level. Well, not exactly a widower, but objectively the same thing. Aunt Berthe still looks great. You heard what Mimi said."

"Berthe doesn't need a widower," said Marie. "She can sit on her front balcony and watch widowers running in Parc Lafontaine any Sunday. There's no room in the flat for a widower. All the closets are full. In the spare-room closet there are things belonging to you, Raymond. That beautiful white rodeo belt with the silver buckle Aunt Berthe gave you for your fourteenth birthday. It cost Berthe thirty dollars, in dollars of that time, when the Canadian was worth more than the American."

"Ten cents more," said Raymond.

"Ten cents of another era," said Marie. "Like eighty cents today."

"Aunt Berthe can move if she feels crowded," he said. "Or she can just send me the belt." He spoke to Mimi. "People in Montreal move more often than in any other city in the world. I can show you figures. My father wasn't a Montrealer, so we always lived in just the one house. *Maman* sold it when he died."

"I wouldn't mind seeing that house," said Mimi, as though challenging Marie to produce it.

"Why should Berthe move?" said Marie. "First you want to tie her up with a stranger, then you want to throw her out of her home. She's got a three-bedroom place for a rent you wouldn't believe. She'd be crazy to let it go. It's easier to find a millionaire with clean habits than my sister's kind of flat."

"People don't get married to have three bedrooms," said Mimi, still holding Berthe's picture. "They get married for love and company."

"I am company," said Marie. "I love my sister, and my sister loves me."

"Do you think I married Raymond for *space*?" said Mimi.

Raymond said something in English. Marie did not know what it meant, but it sounded disgusting. "Raymond," she said. "Apologize to your wife."

"Don't talk to him," said Mimi. "You're only working him up."

"Don't you dare knock your chair over," said his mother. "Raymond! If you go out that door, I won't be here when you get back."

The two women sat quietly after the door slammed. Then Mimi picked up the fallen chair. "That's the real Raymond," she said. "That's Raymond, in public and private. I don't blame any man's mother for the way the man turns out."

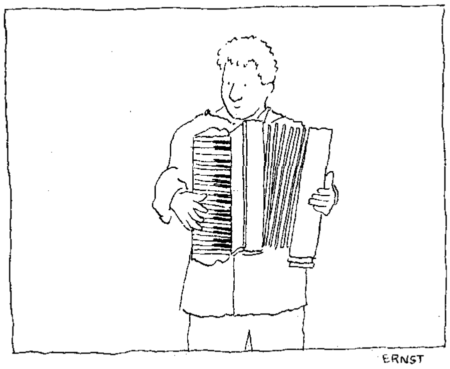
"He had hair like wheat," said Marie. "It turned that rusty color when he was three. He had the face of an angel. It's the first time I've ever seen him like this. Of course, he has never been married before."

"He'll be lying on the bed now, sulking," said Mimi. "I'm not used to that. I hadn't been married before, either." She began rinsing plates at the sink. The slit of a window overlooked cars and the stricken palms. Tears ran down her cheeks. She tried to blot them on her arm. "I think he wants to leave me."

"So what if he does leave," said Marie, looking in vain for a clean dish towel. "A bad, disobedient boy. He ran away to Vietnam. The last man in our family. He should have been thinking about having sons instead of travelling around. Raymond's father was called Louis. My father's name was Odilon. Odilon-Louis—that's a nice name for a boy. It goes in any language."

"In my family we just have girls," said Mimi.

"Another thing Raymond did," said Marie. "He stole his father's gold watch. Then he lost it. Just took it and lost it."



SCENIC VIEW

From the scorch and poverty and from the cumin and opulence
of the Indian plains, dust gathers and spores convene.
Pollen insects alive or in desiccate husk,

flecks of grit and commas lost in translation from
one of India's fifteen official languages to another—
all these are lofted by thermals toward the nival

heaven of the Himalayas, where it's so cold the warmth
of a dead insect—its last, gray-embered smidge
of decay—is enough to burn through the onionskin

snow crust an icy, open grave. Which will soon
be pillaged by a phalangid spider who knows how
to snatch the remains without dislodging the rim

and becoming the depth, so delicate is the future
at 16,000 feet, where the genetic code burns like a pilot
light in every body, in every of the future's parasites.

—WILLIAM MATTHEWS

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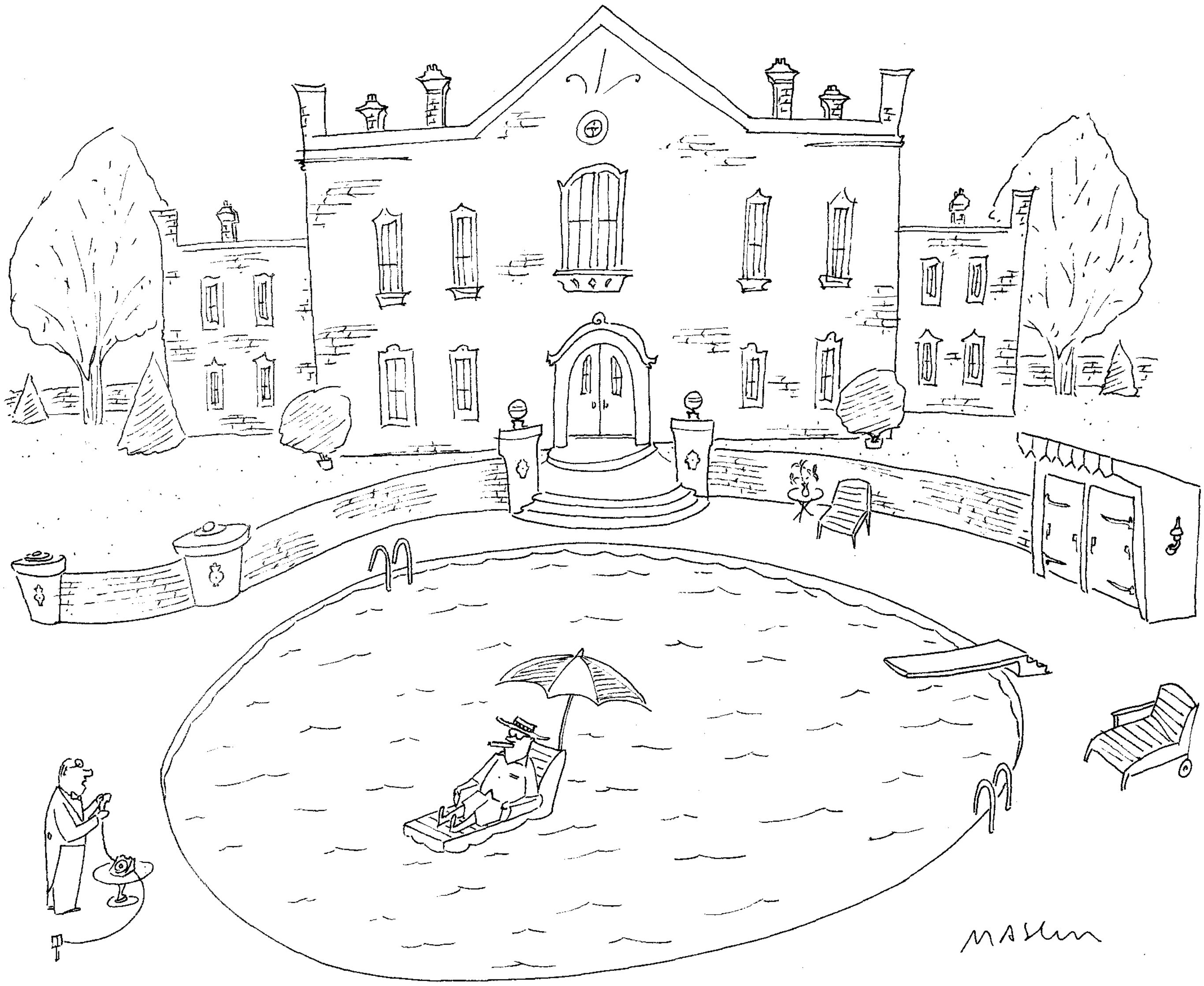

"Sir, a Mr. Krueller, of the real world. Are you in?"

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"Raymond never lost that watch," said Mimi. "He probably sold it to two or three different people. Raymond will always be Raymond. I'm having a baby. Did he tell you that?"

"He didn't have to," said Marie. "I guessed it, when we were in the car. Don't cry anymore. They can hear. The baby can hear you."

"He's already heard plenty from Raymond."

Marie's English died. "Look," she said, struggling. "This baby has a grandmother. He's got Berthe. *You've* got Berthe. Never mind Raymond."

"He'll need a father image," said Mimi. "Not just a lot of women."

"Raymond had one," said Marie. "He still joined the Marines."

"He or she," said Mimi. "I don't want to know. I want the surprise. I hope he likes me. She. It feels like a girl."

"It would be good to know in advance," said Marie. "Just for the shopping—to know what to buy. Do you want to save the rest of the shrimp or throw it out?"

"Save it," said Mimi. "Raymond hardly ate anything. He'll be hungry later on."

"That bad boy," said Marie. "I don't care if he never eats again. He'll find out what it's like, alone in the world. Without his mother. Without his aunt. Without his wife. Without his baby."

"I don't want him to be alone," said Mimi, showing Marie her streaked face, the sad little curls stuck to her wet cheeks. "He hasn't actually gone anywhere. I just said I thought he was thinking about it."

Marie tried to remember some of the English Berthe used. When she was talking to people from her office, Berthe would say, "All in good time," and "No way he can do that," and "Count on me," and "Not to worry."

"He won't leave you," said Marie. "No way I'll let him do that. Count on me." Her elbow brushed against the handle of the refrigerator door; she felt a silvery spark through the chiffon sleeve. This was the first time such a thing had happened in Florida: it was like an approving message from Berthe. Mimi wiped her hands on a paper towel and turned to Marie.

"Be careful," said Marie, enfolding Raymond's wife and Raymond's baby. "Be careful the baby doesn't get a shock. Everything around here is electric. I'm electric. We'll have to be careful from now on. We've got to make sure we're grounded." She had gone into French, but it didn't matter. The baby could hear, and knew what she meant.

—Mavis Gallant

THE CORRIDORS OF MR. CYRIL

"WE'VE got to move, darling," said Patricia.

George looked up at the ceiling. "Is this one going to collapse, too?" He put on his spectacles. "Oh, yes, I think I saw it move then."

"Not that I saw."

"You didn't with the music room, and you didn't with the spare room. You didn't even get any insurance on the spare room."

"The adjustments assessor poked the ceiling with his umbrella and then put up the umbrella, because the room was raining lath and plaster, busting the roof even more. He said that this was an old house, the lease being drawn up in the second duke's time and now we're up to the twelfth duke, and he said we had no cover against wear and tear."

"I would have said the room now had no cover at *all*, owing to lack of roof," George said.

"You always had *l'esprit de l'escalier*," said Patricia.

"What's that?"

"Wit on the staircase."

"Nonsense. I would never be witty on any staircase in this house. Danger lurks in every tread and riser."

"I think it's a metaphor." Patricia then stayed silent, trying to think of a way of getting back to the question of moving.

"The adjustments assessor is not a metaphor for anything except playing golf," George said. "On each of his many visits he has whipped ruddily across London very early in the morning with an umbrella to poke out possible dry rot. And he has had a day full of appointments ahead in Weybridge and Walton-on-Thames, where they play a lot of golf. His assessments are on Monday, Thursday, and Friday, and they're long days, because golf is a long game."

"Do you know why?" Patricia was still trying to move him round, subtly, to the avoided horror of packing.

"Oh, dove, this is so much more interesting than moving. Why?"

"I think it's because golf has a built-in anticlimax. It starts with a drive and ends with a putt. It should be the other way round."

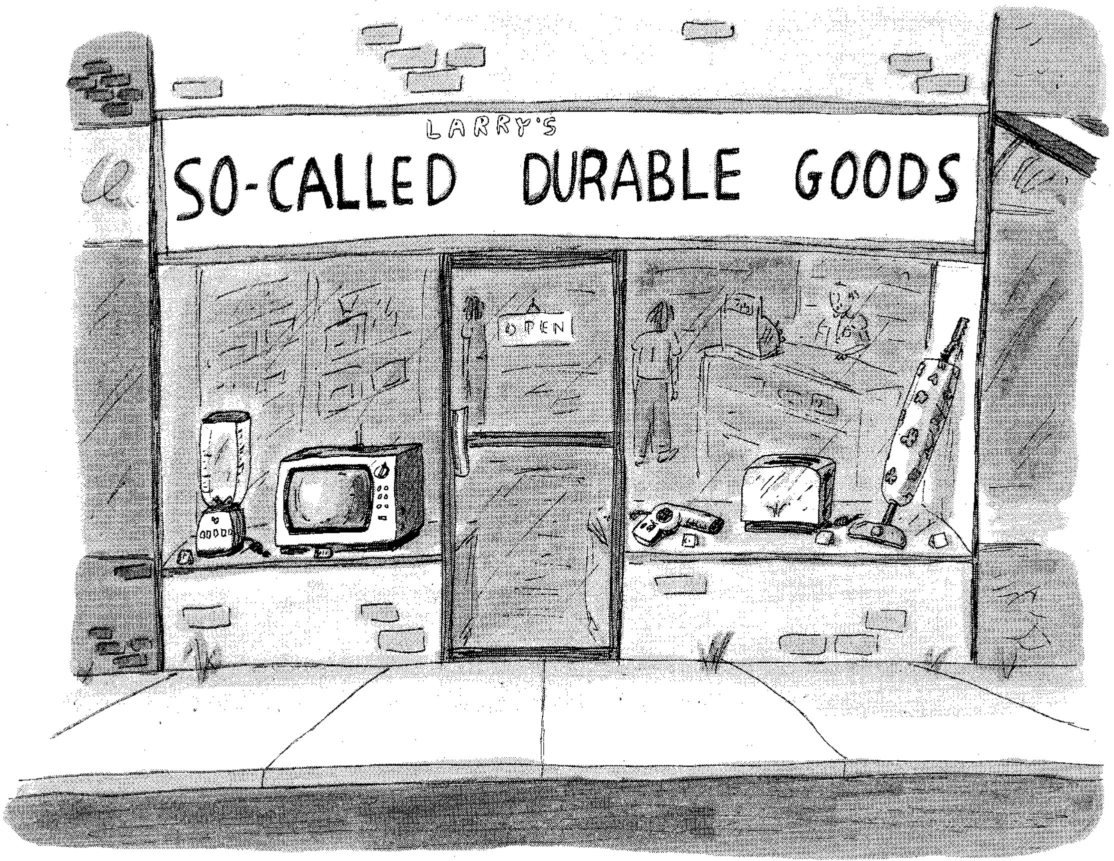
George moved an ashtray, thinking in the back of his mind about his beloved wife moving house. The ashtray looked breakable, so he pocketed it. "Pocketing a fragile object under threat from movement in roofs," he said, "is as close as possible to protecting it in danger as seen by insurance companies, such as times of riot, civil commotion, strike or labor disturbance, acts of God, subsidence or heave of the site, abnormal storm, arson not including wanton neglect of domestic appliances or coastal or river erosion. For my part, there is serious danger in packing. There is no cover for that." He moved in his chair. "I know the insurance policy by heart. We are not covered against the adjustments assessor's umbrella and the rubble that has been coming down the chimney since he put up the brolly. We are onto a bad thing. What's the man's name? Ashley. Yes, that would be it, Ashley."

"Another house, George. A house where we are the landlords. We have no wish to be lessees. It sounds lesser."

"That would have been the intent of etymology, I'm afraid." He waited a little, and then grasped at straws. "When you said moving, was it actually moving to another house that was in your mind? Rather than subsidence or heave of the site?"

"Yes, darling. I've found a much more runnable house, in Battersea, where we could have a fire escape and a spiral staircase and convert the bottom coat cupboard, which is perfectly huge, into a workroom where you could do as much wiring as you wanted to without asking any twelfth duke's consent. I can see the inhibition on you: our wiring needs get on your nerves sometimes."

"Look at this, for instance," said George, pointing around the room. "Old wires landing in midair without proper insulating tape, old telephone wires ditto, old heating wires from plugs that come through holes drilled through my shelf of Gibbon. The fuse boxes in the basement go back to the Crimea. But as to *moving*." He got up. "It is a drastic step. I shall go upstairs to read Mrs. Beeton and think about



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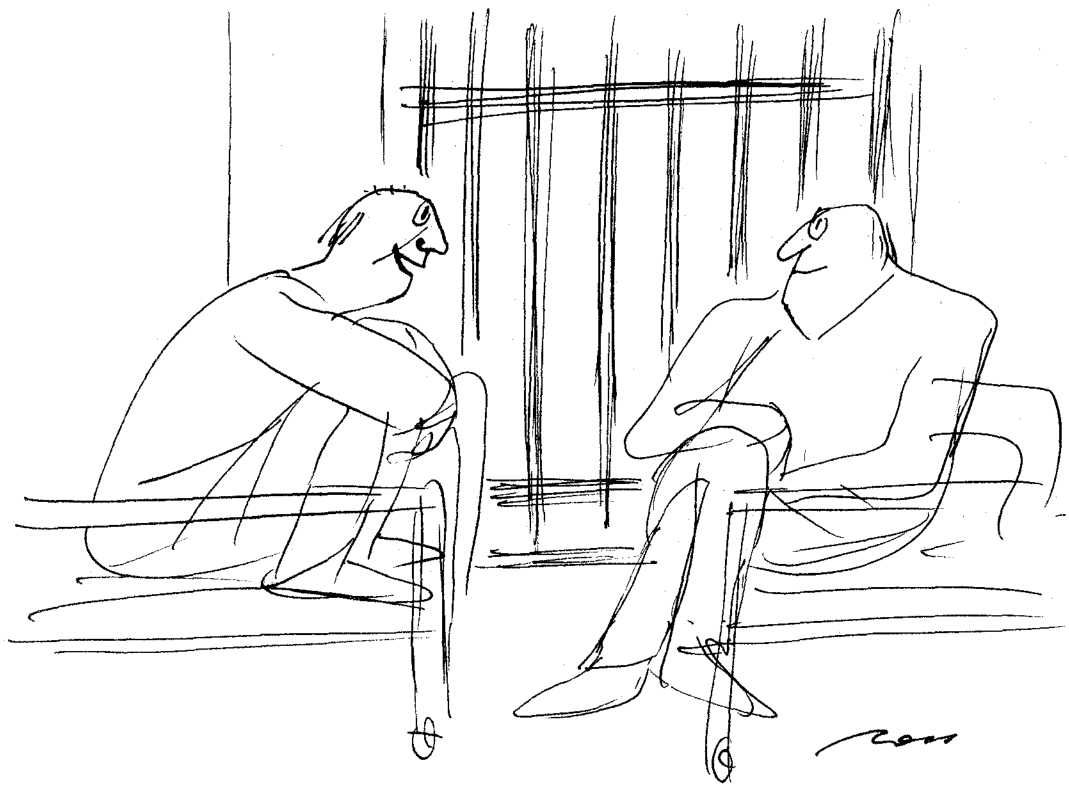
it. The burden would fall on you, and I think you couldn't do it. No one can be expected to move.”

Later, he came back. She was making lists. He said, “What you need mostly is boxes.”

“You should surely see the house?”

“I'm sure you've chosen right. It will only take you a few days. I'll go to an hotel. I'll ring you often. I've decided to go into an early decline and think about a new career.” He closed the door, and then opened it again, weeping, and said, “I can't bear moving, you see. Discovering leaking rusty radiators, and I'd only be in the way. The removal men can do the actual loading.”



“*The jury just laughed at my alibi. Now, when I think about it, I find* *__myself__* *chuckling.*”

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For three nights, without waking her, he heaved into the big marble larder dozens of boxes that he had painted in different colors to cheer her on, labelled with the name of each room as he imagined her progress: “Glasses, cutlery, *kitchen;*” “Cushions, *various rooms;*” “Books, *library*, please pile in shelf order;” “Chaise-longue cushions, *bathroom;*” and so on and so on. And finally a letter to his wife, giving the address of his hotel and ending, “Don't mean to desert you but I really can't bear moving. How are you going to fit it in with *your* working hours? What a shock. I wonder why people assume that change is for the better. I loathe hotels, I think, but I'd be in the way here, moaning and groaning. You need professional moaners and groaners, professional movers. Tip stingily if they're no fun, and don't let them break our things more than usual. P.S. There's a Fred Astaire picture down the road. I should leave them to it and go if you feel it safe. Fred's counsel is to be depended on. ‘By myself alone.’ Love always, G.”

GEORGE'S Pimlico hotel was an old and large residential one with long corridors, run on Robin Hood principles by an old man who had studied the life of serfs long ago in his days at Oxford. He liked to be called Cyril “in honor of St. Cyril, who brought Christianity to the Slavs and gave his name to the Cyrillic alphabet.” Cyril was historically on the serfs' side, and George, when he first came to book his room, had got that in a second from Cyril's hand-me-down porter's uniform. Cyril warmed to George as a possibly permanent guest of occasional payment. In his view this could always be adjusted by milking the rich landowners who liked his hotel, kept largely unoccupied rooms there, and lodged their fishing rods and game bags in the storeroom when they took off on other business. Their bills had large items for “FORWARDING OF PRIVATE POSTAL OBJECTS” and for “LODGEMENT UNDER MR. CYRIL'S PERSONAL CARE OF VARIOUS SPORTING REQUISITES.”

“I'll be moving in,” said George, shaking at the word, “as soon as possible.”

“Anything up, sir?”

“There's a move going on at home. They say it will only take a few days.”

“Oh no, sir. There'll be trouble with the four-inch ducts, tea on the go for months.”

“My poor wife.”

“Women often enjoy these things.”

“I don't think she does altogether. I've seen even as little as two cisterns get her down.”

“One of my Honorables here is an excellent plumber. Not a union man. He is very well-heeled by his father's business in cotton reels. We could have a Madeira together and arrange the work tonight.”

“Six o'clock? I'm going to the theatre at eight.”

“Not much on that's any good. Person after person of mine leaves at the interval these days.”

“Well, *there* would be something to get one's teeth into. Improving Shaftesbury Avenue.”

“You wouldn't mean drilling, would you, sir? My people are adverse to noise, very adverse.” He was firmly at the tiller. “Hadn't you better see your room?”

“I had it in mind.” George handed Cyril his brown leather grip, an old friend. It was now held shut by two brown leather belts of Patricia's, of waist too small, extended with some good seamen's knots in curtain twine. At the mere sight George shuddered, on Patricia's behalf and on his own.

“The best butler I ever housed among my people here was called

Twine," said Cyril. "I also had a lady close to him, called Plinth, but that is another matter. They are two excellent words. I fancy monosyllables. I think we should discuss finding a monosyllabic word for the monosyllable." Cyril went upstairs with the grip and opened a door quietly, a long way along a corridor. "Would this suit, for the interim or other?"

George inspected the room. "A double bed."

"No extra charge, sir."

"And is there no telephone?"

"We have a phone booth downstairs. In case of incoming calls, we take messages and provide information as required. For instance, health, time of theatre curtain call, plumber."

"Even the plumber who's an Honorable?"

"In any case, a plumber of the highest. Our particular expert works in his working clothes, which is to say his writing clothes, with one bootboy's overall over them, always returned spotless. I don't know how he does it. He walks regularly around or across Nepal, and writes books after each journey. His room is crammed with books from the London Library. Lucky we are so close to the London Library. And many cards from the Library requiring return of books that he has sometimes kept for more than a year. One of my people, a woman of great intelligence, tells me that his room is uncleanable but very neat as to books. The books are in piles, each labelled 'Three months overdue,' 'Six months overdue,' and so on. This entails changing of labels on return from Nepal, and the situation worsens. I believe she said there was a pile labelled 'Vastly overdue,' but that is only hearsay. I expect him back shortly. His name is Markham. Quite close to the monarchy, but a card-carrying member and inclined to the Scots side of nationalism. What an old affair to be engaged in. I prefer the immediate, such as Nepal: helping with diseases there, and so on. What is your calling in work, if I may ask, sir?"

"Waiting."

"Ah, writing."

"No, waiting."

"The same thing, many of my people find."

"Very slow of them." George softened, and said, "I'm trying to get out of computer analysis."

"I am not akin to analysis, but to every man his own friend, which one imagines an analyst is. One feels more kindly toward computers now, for being in need of analysis."

George could only agree. Why dispute.

LATE that night Cyril knocked on his door and said Patricia had rung from Battersea and needed a plumber. "Markham's back, full of Nepalese germs, and he's going over after dropping a few token overdue books through the London Library letter box." He shut the door and then reopened it to throw in a hot-water bottle that the maid, never seen, had forgotten. He banged the door shut again without a word.

"Thank you very much," shouted George.

"Saw you come in from the theatre. We missed our Madeira. Pity." Fading voice as Cyril went downstairs.

"Rotten play," said George.

"They are." Comment from the stairs.

"Any chance of dinner?" George shouted.

No answer.

George went out to seek his wife in the new house after leaving a note about electric-light bulbs: "Dear Cyril, Have you anything by way of a bulb that is more than 25 watts? I should appreciate two for reading. Shame that the Madeira fell through."

George found his way to the Battersea place. He knocked at the lintel of the front door, the door itself not yet being installed, and ran upstairs to what he assumed must be the bedroom. There was a coil of long legs in khaki shorts around the washbasin pipes, and a noise of crashing water that was more than weather. The head of the coil was not visible but there was an identifying plumber's wrench on the floor. Patricia was sitting on the bed eating a Scotch egg among piles of boxes.

"This is Mr. Markham, darling."

"Yes, I guessed. How do you do. What's the more treble of the water sounds?"

"Wear and tear on attic water tank," said the explorer's voice.

"H_2O problems ever present in moving," said Patricia. "Darling, you need more dinner than a Scotch egg. Mr. Markham got us ours from the pub next door."

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

As soon as you leave, you enter
memory, and that small emissary
of yourself immediately loses
its credentials. No longer yours,
you can't recall it, or send it
instructions on tactical lying.
You may have armed yourself with
heavy qualifiers, been Henry James,
but turn your back, it's theirs.

Thus, memory. And each fresh
installment of yourself, though
exquisite, is still lump clay.
Even the other tack, sincerity,
has zero chance because revelations
have nothing to do with memory.
Trapped, you have only the whim
they toss at you to put on.
You are a small being now, just
a fraction of the old self.
Your mother tongue begins to suffer,
like an émigré's. Plainly, you
were the aggregate of what you gave
up. Now you are suspiciously
plural. What is happening to you?
It is like glimpsing someone who
favors you in an old movie
you used to like. And yet,

the costume is absurd, not to
mention the horse. Or these
others, also with your face, jerking their spears in the air.
Spilled change, their faces turn
briefly to the you they obviously
can't see. And the barbaric
shouts they make, this cast of
thousands swarming over the dust!

—DAVID RIGSBEE

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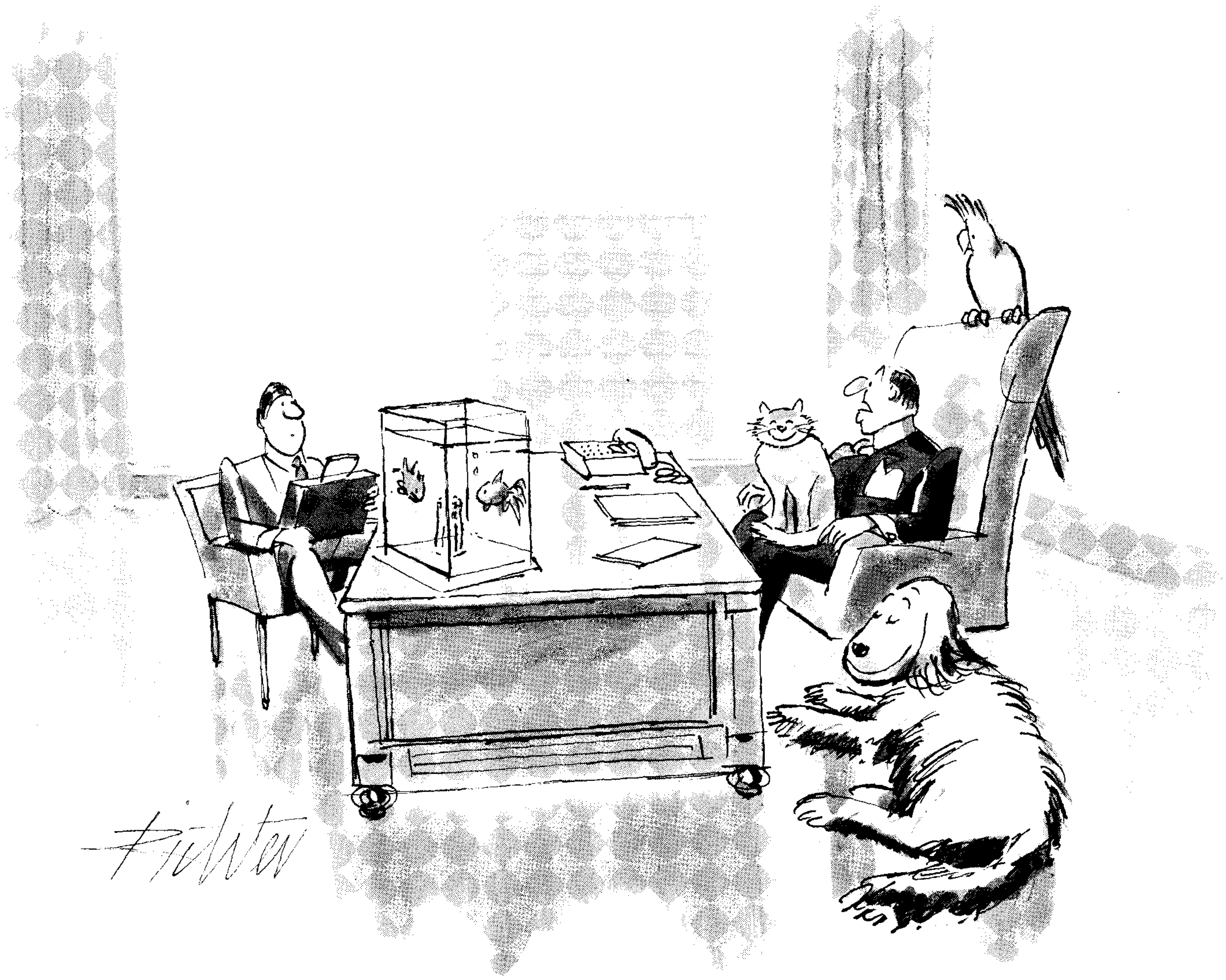


"It's lonely at the top, that's why."

• •

"Ours!" George walked across the hypothetical floor and yelled, "There are five planks missing. No man can be expected to live in such chaos."

"Mr. Markham is different," said Patricia, being thoughtful of unwilling eavesdroppers. "He has sorted out Nepal many times."

"Nepal would make him hardy, and anyway it is a courteous country, free of the oaths caused by modern plumbing."

Patricia was suddenly near to tears—with fatigue, her husband hoped—and she led him into another room, empty of everything but bookshelves. She sat on the floor. George said, "Wait. Splinters. This doesn't look a reliable floor," and folded an old newspaper several times for her to sit on.

"George," she said. "Mr. Markham and I had an affair in a sort of way today." She looked away. "It was during his tea break."

George walked about and jingled the change in his right-hand pocket, which turned out to have a hole in it. The coins dribbled down the inside of his trouser leg and onto the floor, some disappearing through gaps in the wood.

"Yes," he said. Then he shouted, "This on top of hotel life!" He was crying, but with his back turned. When he was five, he had cried because he had lost his new cricket ball, and an aunt with whom he was parked had said, "If you don't stop that horrible noise I won't like you anymore." He stopped, and she seemed to put up with him well enough again, but ever since he had suspected people who strove to make people like them. He was quite determined that his wife should not warm to him because he so missed her. Despite that, he said to her, his back still turned, "I suppose you wouldn't come to the hotel with me? There's a double bed. Mr. Markham would look after things."

"I've got to stay, darling. I hate it here. I'm so hungry. But someone's got to oversee things."

He had thought she would be hungry, and brought out of his pocket—the intact one—four bars of chocolate. At the same time he said, "I don't know if you can find me a needle and cotton for this bust pocket."

"I'll do it. Don't they do things like that at the hotel?"

"It's not that sort of hotel."

"You're not that sort of man."

"The hotel is an edifice and I am a person, and edifices—*edifices*, this one for instance—are wretchedly resistant to change."

Now holding back tears in her turn, she threaded a needle, and he then followed her decorously into the bathroom for the mending. Quite easy, George decided, having thought ahead of the basic step of turning his trousers inside out. The achievement made both him and Patricia feel a little better. When they came back Mr. Markham's head peered out of the granny knot of his limbs, and one arm waved a wrench. No words passed. None were possible. Patricia stepped prettily over the holes in the floors and kissed George good night. "The telephone will be in tomorrow. It's our old number."

"I'll ring every day. I'm keeping strange hours at the moment, but I'll keep trying. I suppose you're tied to plumbing." He didn't say "to Mr. Markham," and she hadn't expected him to.

GEORGE stayed in his room, avoiding Madeira and any sight of Mr. Markham. Lonely, he parked an upright chair near his open door after the theatre, where he went every night, and watched the comings and goings of Mr. Cyril's people. Suites with separate doors; glances between a man and a woman going in by separate entrances; much scuttling along corridors, with Mr. Cyril bringing caviar and champagne to the favored end and hanging "Do Not Disturb" notices on the doors of the guests he didn't take to. His people were dashing, the women often wearing feather boas that shed and the men brilliantly polished patent-leather shoes.

He telephoned Patricia one night before the theatre.

"You sound sleepy," she said.

"I've only just got up. There'll be a pub at the interval."

"I don't understand about this place. Don't they complain when you don't get up at bed-making time?"

"I couldn't exactly say there is one. Sometimes they're miraculously the same, the sheets, and then you have to put up for days without them when they're at the dry cleaner's."

"For sheets? Sheets go to laundries."

"The hotel prefers dry cleaners."

"It's a ridiculous expense."

"The sheets come back like silk. Ironed to last you a fortnight."

"It doesn't sound very practical," said Patricia. "Or usual."

"How are the four-inch ducts?"

"The builders can't find the run of the R.S.J.s."

"Is R.S.J. another Mr. Markham?"

"Rolled-steel joists. I went to the library. Are you getting anything decent to eat?"

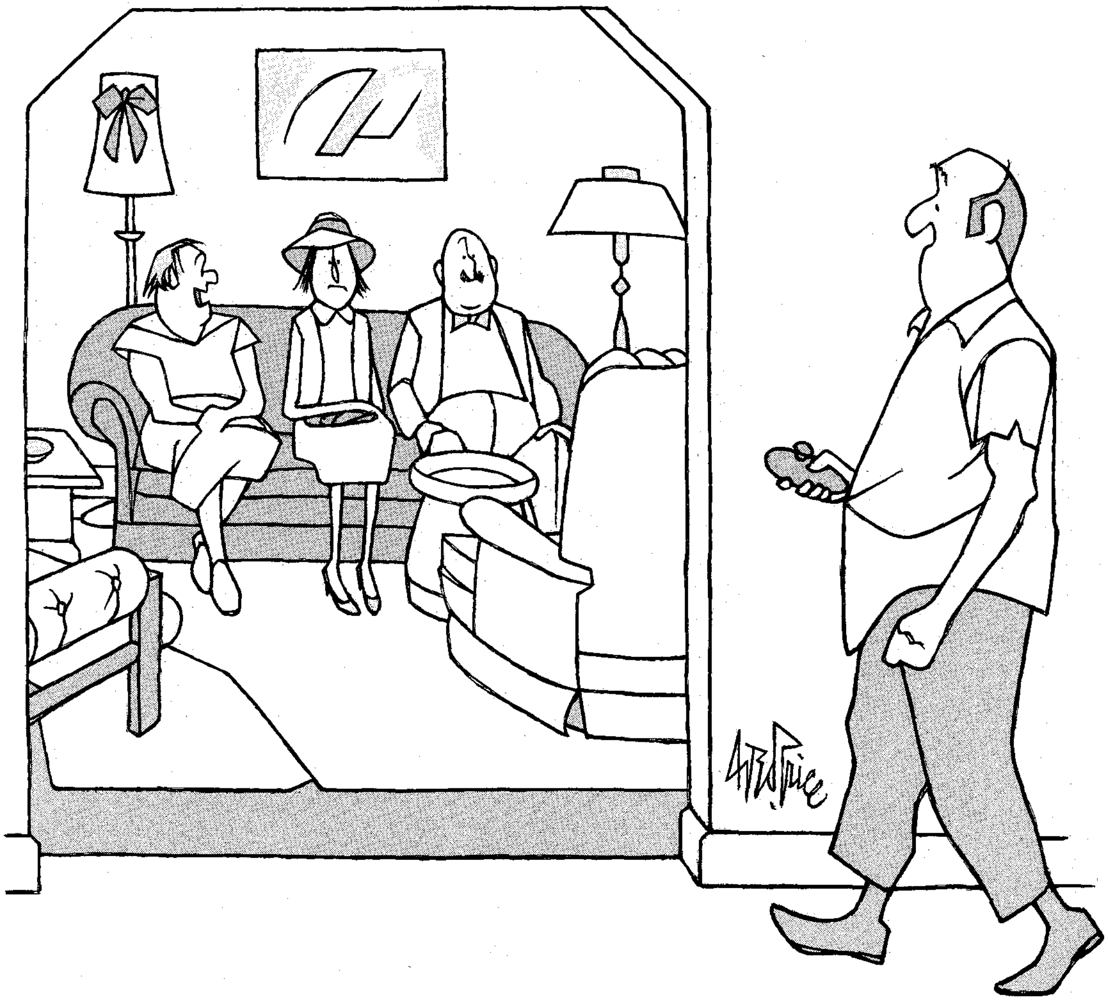
"Are you?" George said. "I fancy plain Dover sole, not lemon, but I've booked a table at midnight and I don't want you out alone at midnight. May I take you back?"

"What are you doing the rest of the night?"

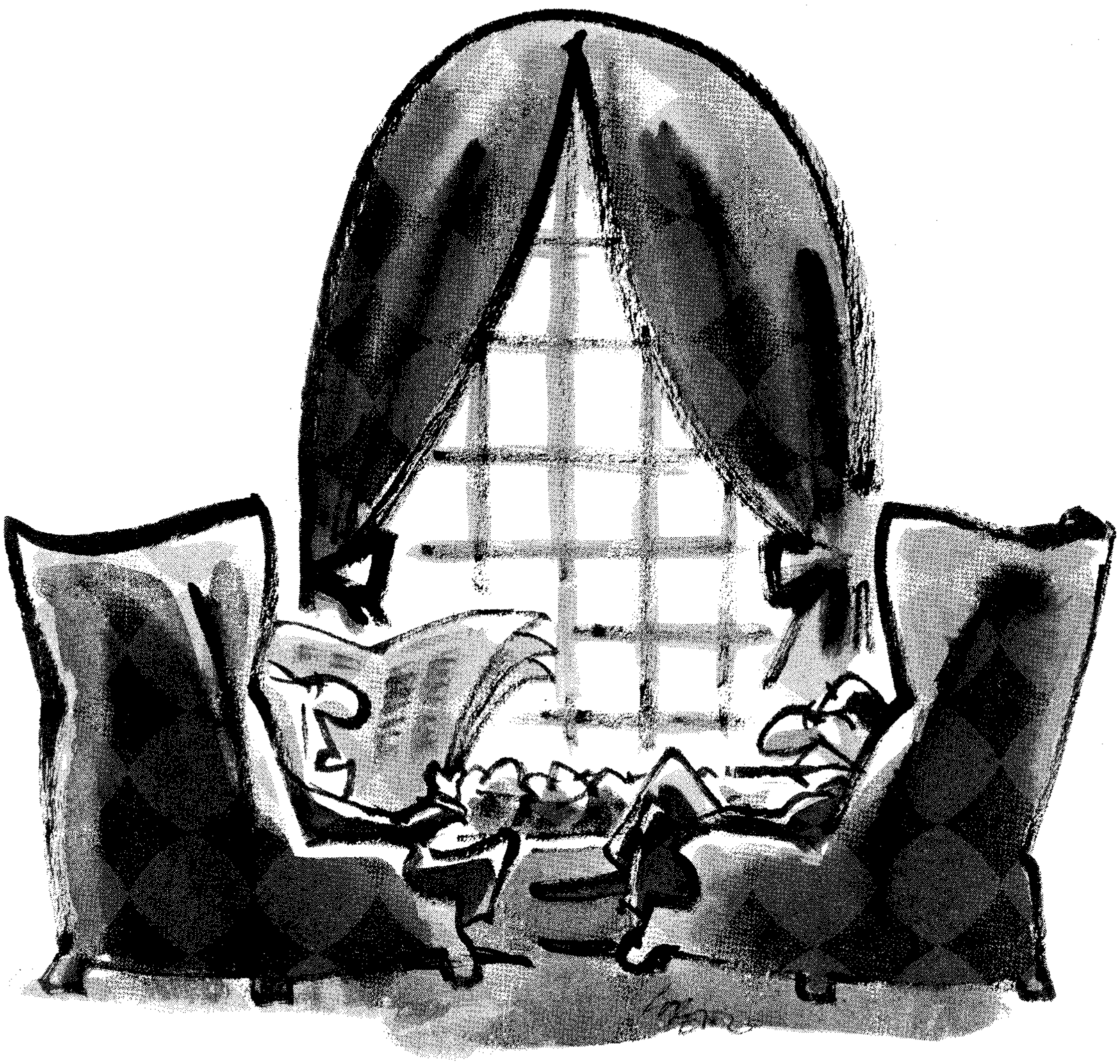
"Trying to put my life in order. I don't know what to do, but it's emerging, with luck, that I'm not a computer analyst. Can you get a taxi and meet me at midnight?" He gave her the address of the restaurant. They met there, and the chef had run out of Dover sole. But it was fine to see each other. They had something abominably greasy called chicken-in-the-basket. George dropped her and went back to the hotel.

Going into the wardrobe in his room, parting the coat hangers, he saw a pretty girl beyond his hangers parting her hangers. They had opened their doors at the same moment. A suite-through wardrobe. This was how such things were managed: through unexpected furniture. She blushed and said, "Sorry, I was looking for my dressing gown." He made some sort of bow, said, "Don't worry," and they both closed their wardrobe doors against each other's gently.

IT was the beginning of a new routine for George. Interested by the hotel, despairing of the new house's ever being finished, he took to sleeping until teatime, then going to the theatre, then sitting at cafés and restaurants and watching. Then coming



"But don't expect too much. Carl hasn't touched his kazoo in years."



"Kids today don't care about anything except money—thank God."

• •

back to the hotel to watch the goings on along his corridor until three or four in the morning. Then writing about the fancied elaborations of adultery that never come off. Perhaps Mr. Markham, never again seen, led to his notes. Perhaps the double wardrobe did, or loneliness, or the uninvigorating state of the London theatre.

He began to put together farces, working in the early-morning hours. They were about courteously flouted trysts. They involved long-legged would-be courtiers with legs and arms twisted in knots around the plumbing of bedrooms where they should not have been; twittering pretty girls based on the character of his wardrobe encounter; made-up uniformed servants with deep and magisterial voices who were responsible at all hours for the respectability of the place. And tireless children with pink faces bouncing into places of unconsummated adult romance in the hope of an early game of Ping-Pong or of help in cleaning out a goldfish bowl; mothers-in-law or housekeepers with hostility to happiness; flat-footed policemen wheeling bicycles uphill and puffing in pursuit of nonexistent burglars; spineless sportsmen bursting into their fiancées' rooms and sighting with suspicion the plumber's loops of limbs, which in George's fancy habitually belonged to a tall and shy suitor lost in medieval love and hoping impossibly to hide. George was much inspired by the hotel and its rows of doors banging open and shut like the first-class-cabin doors of a not very seaworthy but very costly liner in a storm.

Love entered into his plots, but at a hotel distance. The plays were typed for him by a lady above a shop that advertised invisible mending, with a mannequin invisibly turning the wheel of a sewing machine and rounding her head every sixty seconds to smile at her public. The plays were put on, and, perhaps because of the yearning in them that George so strictly suffocated, they spoke to an audience that had thought itself deadened by the time's pretentious plays, which could only be listened to at all if they were accorded the excuse of being in blank verse. His plays, about apparently witless people who spoke a decisive repartee at a stately mile a minute, were about nothing world-shaking whatsoever and conveyed only delight. He and Patricia saw each other every day, themselves consummated in constancy. In their view, four-inch ducts and trouble with them could always be quelled. Their devotion to each other would never dwindle, though George was to live in his hotel in growing fame forever after.

"I can't understand how our setup works," said Patricia over a 3 A.M. baked bean or two. "But it's paying for the plumbing. Not covered by insurance, either it or we."

George wrote the sentence on a paper napkin, because it had the rhythm that appealed to him, and said, "It may be because critics say that the stuff I write is farce, which is up to them, of course. I wouldn't say you and I are farce. Would you? I'm just writing about doors opening and closing on people one never knows. People one never finds except in hotels. You and I know each other too well to fit into my sort of stuff." They together avoided the two-hundredth suggestion of chicken-in-the-basket to follow, and George, for the two-hundredth time, took her to the house before going back to work. —PENELOPE GILLIATT

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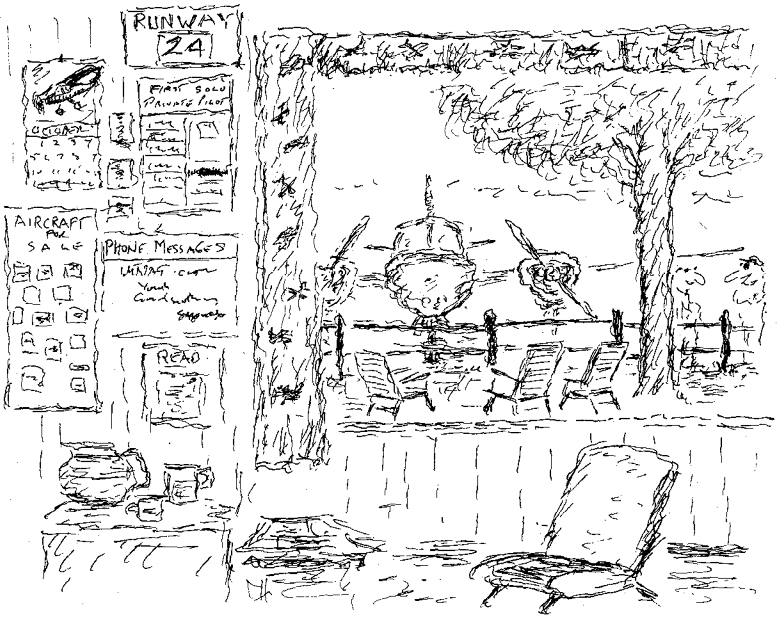
BEES RELENTLESS
IN MARCH TO U.S.
SCIENTISTS LOOK FOR WAYS
TO LESSEN THEIR IMPACT
—*Los Angeles Times.*

Steal their tiny shoes?

A REPORTER ALOFT

SMALL AIRPORTS



AFTER the Second World War, America found itself with thousands of young men and women who had learned to fly airplanes and wanted to keep on flying—not necessarily as a profession. About the same time, American businessmen discovered aviation as an efficient tool for increasing sales and prestige. And there were those who, like me, were too young to fly in the war but yearned to control a machine in the sky. Newspaper and magazine feature stories predicted that, as a result of all this, recreational aircraft would soon be as common to America's middle class as the second car, and for a while that seemed almost possible. War-surplus airplanes and inexpensive new "family" four-seaters were readily available; fuel was cheap; the economic picture was rosy. The elders of cities and towns felt that a municipal airport was as much a necessity of modern existence as, say, a Holiday Inn. Local airports sprouted on any nearby acreage deemed sufficiently level. Deserted military airbases were converted into civilian roosts for indigenous fliers. These installations were emblems of progress and development.

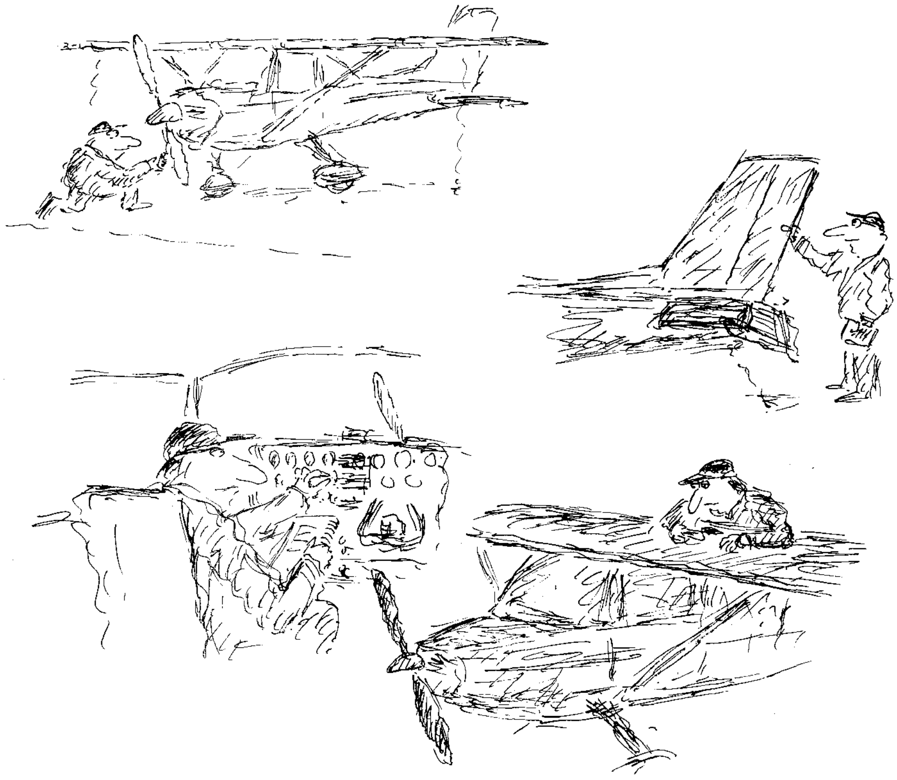
Some small airfields began as just privately owned grass strips in a farmer's back forty, where a personal airplane and the aircraft of a few friends might be quartered. Such farmer fields, as they were called, often grew into something more substantial, with real hangars, full-time mechanics, flight schools, charter services, coffee shops, and control towers. Most, however, never quite made it past the grass-strip stage. Indeed, the increasingly technical nature of flying combined with rising costs to make the dream of a family airplane for weekend jaunts elusive, and even once-solvent airports suffered. In recent years—with aviation-fuel prices five times what they were before 1973, with airplanes and flight lessons double the price, and with stringent federal limitations on light-aircraft flying—many airport owners have sold out to industrial-park and shopping-mall developers. By and large, though, the small airport is hanging in there, if sometimes as little more than an expensive plaything for the determined owner or municipality.

I took up private flying in my middle age, and a particular joy for me in the years since has been dropping in, literally and figuratively, on some of these tenuous airports around the Northeast. A few of them I had to visit as part of my cross-country, or inter-airport, flight training toward my private pilot's license, but now, when I have no pressing destination in mind, I occasionally hop over to some insignificant field for the sheer fun of it. Fun it is, because there aren't the worries of traffic congestion and rigid control attendant on the larger, well-known airports, and the people who run and use the small fields have long struck me as a curious lot—the last eccentrics, in a sense, of contemporary high-tech aviation. In the course of my visits to small airports, I've met a computer engineer who abandoned his profitable career so he could tinker all day long with his ancient light airplane; a flying grandmother who has no intention of ever giving up her favorite sport; an airplane captain who practically lost his job and his wife in order to construct his home-built aerobatic two-seater; a businessman-aviator who invents spurious business trips so he can enjoy splendid solitude in his Piper Arrow; and a lot of people who are strangely like me. What we all have in common is a persistent attraction to light aircraft and what they can do for the human spirit. We come in all sizes, shapes, sexes, and backgrounds, but we tend to be cut from the same cloth. One of our number, a semi-professional flier who would work at any menial task to support his habit, once described us by saying, "We're all like a goddam college fraternity. We may have different prejudices and strong political feelings—usually conservative, I think—but that stuff disappears when we meet another member of the frat. He or she is immediately accepted because he or she is a light-airplane pilot. You just know that in most cases the person is self-reliant, an individualist, a first-rater, who knows what he's doing or he probably wouldn't have that little piece of cardboard from the government certifying that he's an airman. Of course, there are plenty of turkeys masquerading as pilots, but almost everybody I've ever met who flies is kind of special—somebody I want to be with."

Not long ago, I was telling my friend Ed Koren, the artist known for his woolly, barely anthropomorphic subjects, about small airports and their habitués. Ed, who seemed as fascinated by flying as any licensed airman, expressed interest in accompanying me on some trips to see these offbeat people and places. We agreed to arrange our trips casually, flying when the weather was pleasant and our schedules were uncrowded.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1983. Our first trip is to be a trial run—to a little field at Stormville, in New York's Dutchess County, just seventeen nautical miles from my home airport, in Danbury, Connecticut. Meteorologically speaking, this day is a winner, a beauty for our maiden voyage. Last night brought the first frost of the season, and the clean, crisp air it left behind has produced the very definition of what pilots call, in their passion for abbreviation and acronym, CAVU—ceiling and visibility unlimited. Severe clear. As the sun rises higher this morning, the air is getting agreeably warmer by the minute.

Ed and I have arranged to meet at the Sadler Aero Center, a part of the Danbury Municipal Airport, at ten-thirty, but I arrive at Sadler an hour early to preflight my rented two-seater Cessna 152. It is N69061, an airplane I've flown several times before, so I'm familiar with its inoffensive idiosyncrasies. I've almost finished my preflighting—checking the airplane inside and out for glitches and potential glitches—when Ed arrives on the dewy grass in front of the Sadler hangar. He is a short, compact middle-aged man, who, it has often been noted, resembles some of the fuzzy, unkempt characters in his drawings. This morning, he is wearing a floppy hat and carrying a large sketch pad. "So this is the plane we're going in," he says, patting the aluminum skin as if it were the flank of a skittish horse. "It looks neat—small."



I tell him reassuringly that everything checks out fine and the weather couldn't be better. I have found in my limited passenger-carrying experience that involving the passenger in the chores of flying helps take his mind—and mine—off fantasies of disaster. This scheme works wonderfully with Ed. A briefing on our route, our method of navigation to Stormville, and the simple mysteries of the Cessna 152 puts him at ease. He walks through the last stages of the preflighting with me and is interested in every detail. By the time he's buckled in the right-hand seat, he's asking questions about the sectional chart, with its short pencilled line from Danbury to Stormville.

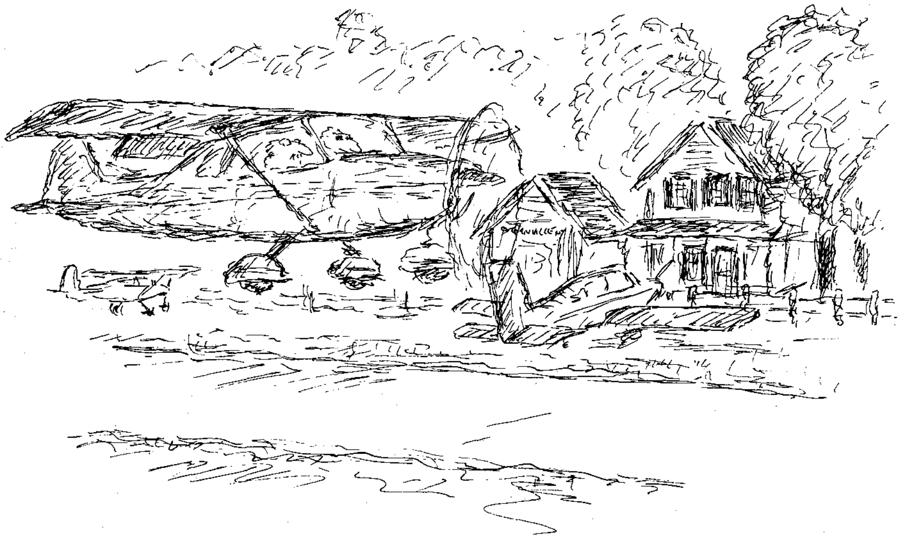
We're all set. I start the engine and call Danbury ground control on frequency 121.60, trying to sound as pro as possible to impress my audience and, perhaps, myself. Among other things, we are informed about the wind's direction and its velocity, and we are told to proceed to Runway 08.

"Zero-six-one," I respond coolly with the last three digits of our identification number by way of confirmation, and we taxi to the end of Runway 08 for the engine run-up (the pre-takeoff testing of the engine at a high power setting) and final checks. I have not filed a flight plan with the Poughkeepsie Flight Service Station, because our trip is so short and the weather is so good. We will get to Stormville by old-fashioned pilotage: following a corrected compass heading and watching for landmarks along the route. I call the Danbury tower on frequency 119.40 and report that I am ready for takeoff, adding that I request a left-turn departure from the traffic pattern. We are cleared. After a quick look around for stray airplanes, I line up on the runway and give it the gun. We hurtle down the paved surface and rise into the sunny eastern sky. I can't resist shouting to Ed, over the engine's roar, "Are you sure you know how to work this thing?" He is staring out the side window at the brilliant foliage and Greater Danbury below. I can tell that he is totally enthralled. Why not? It's simply beautiful up here.

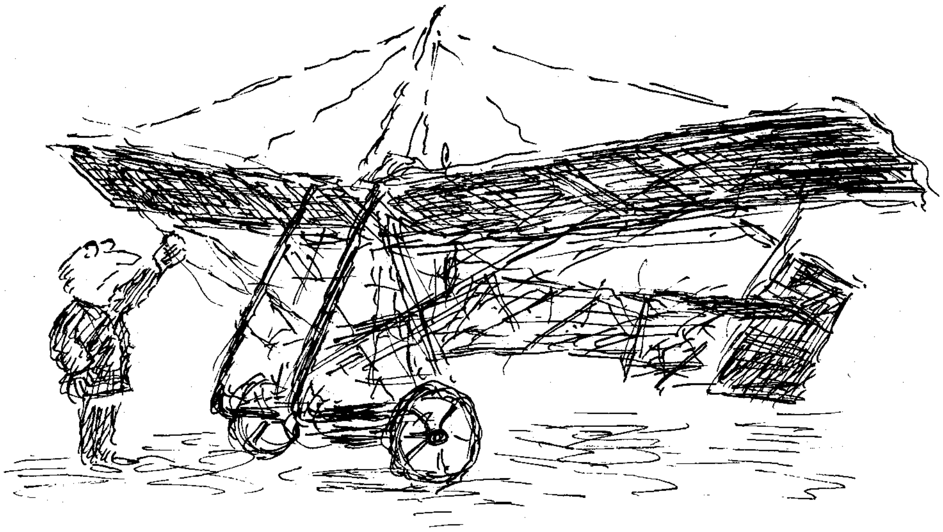
Out of the traffic pattern and climbing to three thousand feet, we pick up our corrected heading of 342 degrees, into the northwest, and shortly see our first pilotage checkpoint—the junction of Interstates 84 and 684, whose tortuous intersecting ramps curl unmistakably beneath the left wing. Ed traces our flight path on the chart with his finger. Railroad tracks running north and south a few miles farther on provide the next checkpoint; then comes a tiny pond along I-84; and then, before we know it, there's the enormous, grim-walled square of the Green Haven Correctional Facility, which abuts, in a shallow valley, the narrow strip that is Stormville Airport's lone runway. With the gentle, abetting tailwind, we have arrived far too soon for such a lovely flying day, and I'm sorry that we didn't choose a more distant destination.

The art of setting down at a small field like Stormville, which has no control tower and is surrounded by other small uncontrolled fields, is to divine what traffic pattern and approach to the runway one should take. Many towerless airports have a radio-communication service called Unicom, which, if anybody down below is manning it, will give the approaching pilot advisories on the wind direction, the active runway, and the immediate traffic in the area. In this part of the Northeast, however, there is almost always considerable clutter on 122.80, the Unicom frequency in common use. When I call in on 122.80, I receive chatter from Waterbury-Oxford (in Connecticut), Sky Acres (north of Stormville), and Wurtsboro (in Sullivan County), but nothing from Stormville. The Stormville wind sock hangs limp, indicating no particular wind in the valley. Since the wind aloft is from the east, I reason that the active runway is 06, into the northeast, not the reciprocal direction of 24, toward the southwest. I can see no local traffic to give me a stouter hint.

Swinging the airplane into a wide circle to avoid the prison, I enter the downwind leg for 06 at the prescribed pattern altitude of twelve hundred feet. Flaps down and descending on the final approach, everything going smoothly, Ed and I suddenly spot a flimsy ultralight—the flying lawn furniture of aviation, little more than a hang glider with an engine—buzzing off Runway 24 like an infuriated yellow jacket and heading right at us. "I guess the active runway is Two-four," I say, with an attempt at coolness, and push the throttle in for a go-around, turning left to avoid the prison. We circle, enter the pattern for Runway 24, and set down easily, rolling to a stop at the taxiway leading to the operations building. Then we park the Cessna on a grassy area near the building, shut down the engine, and step out onto the summery turf. Even with the delay of the aborted first-landing approach, it is only eleven-thirty.



For a weekday morning in October, there is a fair amount of activity at Stormville. A couple of student pilots are preparing for their lessons, others are fussing with their ultralights in a separate building called the Ultralight Aircraft Center, and the usual hangar hounds are just kind of lounging around. Ed and I stroll into the plain white operations building and introduce ourselves to a chunky young fellow behind the counter. His name is Reginald d'Ursel, he tells us in a deep voice with a European accent. It emerges that he is a Belgian, an exchange aviation student "piling up hours, like every other pilot," by working as one of three instructors for the Stormville Flight School; another member of the trio, Albert Kruizinga, is a Dutch exchange student.



"Albert and I were in the armed forces of our different countries. I was in the Air Force, and he was in the Army," d'Ursel says. "We met in the U.S., in a flight school in Michigan, where we came for advanced flying instruction and for our licenses to teach, so we can learn more here. That's how we are in Stormville, New York. Now I must check out a student, and then, if you like, I will return to show you around. Make yourselves at home."

We do make ourselves at home, sipping some fresh hot coffee—a standard commodity in every small-airport operations building—and striking up a conversation with a student pilot, Roy Spangenberger, who is waiting for his instructor to appear for their appointment. Spangenberger tells us he started taking lessons at the large, controlled Dutchess County Airport, near Poughkeepsie, but switched to Stormville because it is ten dollars cheaper per lesson and a lot less complicated. "I have enough to think about at this stage of my flying without worrying about control towers," he says. "Of course, here at Stormville we have that prison over there to avoid. There were once rumors of prison guards shooting at airplanes that flew directly overhead, but that's probably not true. I'm a reactor operator at the Con Edison Indian Point nuclear power plant—I know, you're going to make a joke about why aren't I glowing, or something like that—but it's safer working there than flying. Don't get me wrong, though. I love flying and I can hardly wait to solo. I guess you can say I caught the bug." I tell him that I know the disease well.

Before long, d'Ursel returns. Over more coffee, he tells us that Stormville Airport is owned by an elderly couple named Peter and Rose O'Brien, who live in a white house behind some nearby trees. "The O'Briens' daughter, Pat Carnahan—she really runs things around here, making the money all kinds of ways," he says. "She's in Florida now on some business deal. On weekends in the summer, this place is a three-ring circus, with ultralights, parachute jumpers, hot-air balloons, light airplanes, and multi-engine corporation aircraft—not to mention the flea market, where people drive and fly in from all over to buy and sell just about anything. That's on one weekend in May, July, August, and September. It's a madhouse here. Eleven hundred dealers and thirty-five thousand customers, all on a hundred and fifty-five acres and a thirty-three-hundred-foot landing strip. I will introduce you both to the O'Briens, but first let me show you the place."

The initial stop on our tour is the

Ultralight Aircraft Center, a small white barn serving as a hangar for more ultralights than I have ever seen before under one roof. Though most aviators disdain them, the ultralights are catching on, because of their relatively low purchase price and operating costs. D'Ursel says that he gives instruction in ultralight flying, and I ask him how he does it, since the ultralights are one-seaters. "There is a lot of instruction on the ground," he says, "and I also take the students up in a Piper J-3 Cub to give them a feel for flying very light aircraft." Ed, who thinks perhaps he would like to learn to fly someday, is unconvinced by the ultralights. So am I.

In the rear of the hangar is a real airplane—a very real airplane. It is a Republic Seabee, a wide-body amphibian with a "pusher" propeller—the engine and propeller mounted backward, behind the wing, so there is no obstruction in front of the pilot. The nose of the Seabee can open to provide room for a person to cast flies or dive into a lake; consequently, the Seabee is truly a flying boat, which can also function from land. I have a particular affection for the Seabee. It was brought out by Republic after the Second World War, and an early model was more or less a permanent fixture on a Massachusetts lake where I spent my summers as a boy. The fabulous sight of that lumbering monster roaring off the water, leaving a frothy wake and a majestic spray behind, was the almost daily delight of a plane-crazy kid. The Seabee was supposed to take the place of both the family boat and the family station wagon—to be a complete recreational vehicle—but it was underpowered for its weight and design, and too many Seabee owners ran out of water, or terra firma, before they could lift the thing into the sky. Some modifications were made to increase the power, but the Seabee, alas, had had its day, and its production was discontinued. Pity.

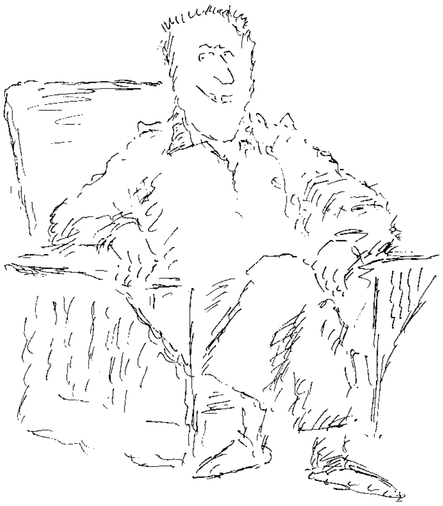
This Seabee in the Stormville hangar must be one of the few flyable ones still around, and it is in mint condition—except for the variable-pitch propeller mechanism, which lies in a million metallic pieces on the tarpaulin-covered fuselage and on a worktable. The million pieces are being worked over by a smiling gentleman in his sixties. He takes a moment from his mechanical puzzle to introduce himself. He is Charles (Chuck) Basset—"last name spelled like the dog"—a retired Pan Am captain, from Ridgefield, Connecticut, who until recently flew huge jet airliners. D'Ursel says that Basset probably spends more time in this hangar with his Seabee than he spends in Ridgefield. Basset nods in resigned agreement. He senses my childlike awe of the Seabee and says, "It's a honey, isn't it? It's the 1947 model, which got a lot of bad press back then, but I'm attached to the old thing. Know it inside and out. In the summer, I fly it up to a cabin I own on Long Lake, in the Adirondacks. That lake is so long I call it Seabee Lake, because the Seabee needs so much water to take off from. It's just right for my purposes."

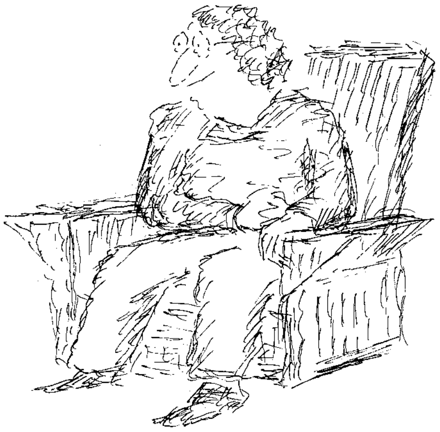
As he is lovingly describing his Seabee's idiosyncrasies, he is interrupted by another Pan Am employee on a busman's holiday—Steve Adrian, who is looking for a jump cable so he can start the dead left engine of his Aero Commander. "Hey," he says to Basset, "want to sell me that Seabee?"

"Sure, for two million dollars," Basset replies.

"I guess I'll stick with my Aero Commander, if I can only get that damn engine started," Adrian says. "Anybody want to come up for a ride, just say so. It's a beautiful day for sightseeing."

D'Ursel thanks him but says we're going over to visit with the O'Briens. As we walk to the O'Briens' house, we pass several airplanes parked on the grass near the runway. "Who can resist flying on a day like today?" says d'Ursel, surveying the sky. "Especially those airline pilots, who get so much time off. It seems they never get tired of flying."





Peter O'Brien, a bouncy gentleman with white hair and rubicund cheeks, welcomes us at the kitchen door as if we were old friends, to the background noise of a swishing dishwasher and a large, loquacious parrot. He and his wife, Rose, usher us into the quieter living room, where they lose no time in bringing up their favorite subject—Stormville Airport.

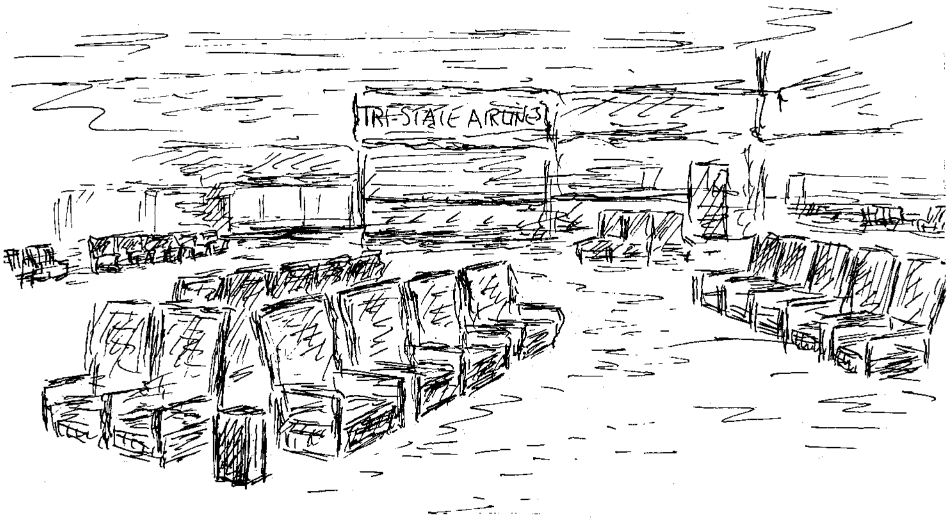
"Well, to begin at the beginning, this house was here first, some two hundred and sixteen years ago," Peter O'Brien says. "It was an inn originally, for cattle drivers from upstate. All around it was just a big hunk of flat land—ideal for letting the cattle and drivers rest. Then, during the First World War, it became Camp Whitman, a training base for recruits. Later, there was a race track here, and on October 26, 1927, I arrived, and I've been here ever since, building up and running my airport. I suppose I hold some sort of American record as the longest continuous owner and operator of an airport at the same location. This place is certainly the oldest airport in these parts, and one of the oldest in the country."

I ask him how he happened to get into the aviation game.

"It started back in the mid-nineteen-twenties when I was a lad of maybe fifteen," he says. "I lived in Westchester County then, going to a one-room schoolhouse with thirty other kids. We called the school a swamp college—Westchester had a lot of swamp then—and one fine day a First World War Jenny flew low right over the schoolhouse. Well, I'd heard about machines called airplanes but I never had seen one that close before. I couldn't think about anything else. The next day, I found out where that Jenny landed, about ten miles away, so I played hooky and went over to see it. I looked the thing over and over, and that was it—I just had to fly it. I took lessons in that Jenny, and before long I was on my own. In those days, you just hired the airplane and went. No licenses, no federal regulations, none of that stuff.

"Now, I didn't have much of an income—I was too damn young to earn anything substantial—but I worked enough at odd jobs to buy myself an old crate and go barnstorming around the country. I performed stunts like loops and spins, which today look pretty tame, and I sold rides. That was a living of sorts back then. Well, in 1927 I heard about this place. I came here and bought it, trying anything to make a buck: repairing airplanes, instructing, running a charter service, building hangars and renting space in them—anything at all. My big break came in 1942, when I began to train some girls who became WASPs. The WASPs were the Women's Air Force Service Pilots—really more of a civilian private group than a government thing. You see, during the war the military wouldn't allow any civilian flying within fifty miles inland of the coastline, and Stormville was just over the fifty-mile boundary, so that worked out pretty good. We had to stay within a five-mile radius of the airport. We trained a pile of those girls, and they were damn good pilots when we finished with them. They'd come here on their own and stay in different houses around the area, paying their own way, since the government didn't contribute anything. From all walks of life they came, some from wealth and some who had to work two weeks to pay for just one flying lesson. We gave them as much primary training as we could in Piper Cubs, Taylorcrafts, Aeroncas—whatever—and then many of them went down to Sweetwater, Texas, for their advanced training. They ended up ferrying B-17s, target towing, test piloting—everything but combat. A hundred and twenty-five girls we had here at any given time, along with fourteen instructors—some of them women, since it was hard to find men during the war. Every now and then, we'll hear from one of the WASP girls. They were terrific."

Rose O'Brien looks wistful at the memory of those days. "That's about the time I came here to work," she says. "Mr. O'Brien and I got married in 1945. There was so much to do here, stitching and doping fabric and what all. I personally never learned to fly. I liked it, all right, but the instructors would take me up and scare me to death with spins and stalls. I went up with some lulus."



"We called them initiation rides," her husband interjects, grinning broadly. "That was the thing, years ago—to get you in an airplane and scare the living Jesus out of you. We were doing it wrong, of course, trying to show people how thrilling and dangerous it is. Now it's just the opposite; we give them demonstration rides, and let them take the controls to show them how safe it really is."

After the WASP training program ended, in 1944, Stormville continued to flourish. It's still flourishing, thanks to the enterprise of the O'Briens' daughter, Pat. "Some weekends, it's a regular field of action," Peter O'Brien says. "Over the years, I guess I've seen it all, from Jennys to jets. Some big changes, not all for the better. There's plenty of room for improvement in general aviation. The cost, for one thing. But the people—they still love to fly, no matter what. Pat's husband is a pilot, and their three children will be pilots one day. Their thirteen-year-old girl is about ready to solo already. It's in the blood."

I ask the O'Briens if any of their closest neighbors, the Green Haven prisoners, have dropped by and expressed a desire to fly, as it were.

Peter O'Brien laughs. "Well, since 1943, when the prison opened, there have been lots of breaks, but they've never tried to steal an airplane," he says. "When they break out, they're running so fast by here they don't stop for nothing. We're safer than somebody five miles down the road, because by then they're tired from running. Once, though, a funny thing happened. Some escapees came by this house and, cool as you please, asked to use our telephone to call for a taxi. Walked right in. The taxi came and they drove off. How's that for nerve?"

Ed and I thank d'Ursel and the O'Briens, and accept their invitation to return on some summer weekend to see Stormville in its three-ring-circus mode. Then we preflight the Cessna, share an apple that Ed brought along for the ride, and take off for Danbury, making a leisurely sightseeing side trip over iridescent Dutchess County. The return trip and the landing at Danbury are uneventful, which is the way flying should be.

Several years ago, when I was a student pilot, I made a cross-country training flight with my instructor, Dave Smith, to a destination with the impressive name of Sullivan County International Airport. This airport, situated in the heart of the Darkest Catskills, was, I had been informed by Dave, something to behold. "Weirdo, like something out of 'The Twilight Zone'—wait till you see it," he said. Sullivan County International, he explained, was built in 1970 to handle an expected new generation of tourists to the Catskills resort areas, from all over the United States and (hence the "international" designation) Canada. It boasted a sixty-three-hundred-foot asphalt runway, capable of receiving all but the heaviest jet airliners, and it had sophisticated navigational devices, ticket counters, baggage-sorting rooms, even a United States Customs Office. The only trouble was that nobody showed up to take advantage of the extraordinary conveniences; the new generation of tourists came to the resorts, all right, but they arrived in their automobiles or by bus, as before. The slick modern air terminal, maintained impeccably over the

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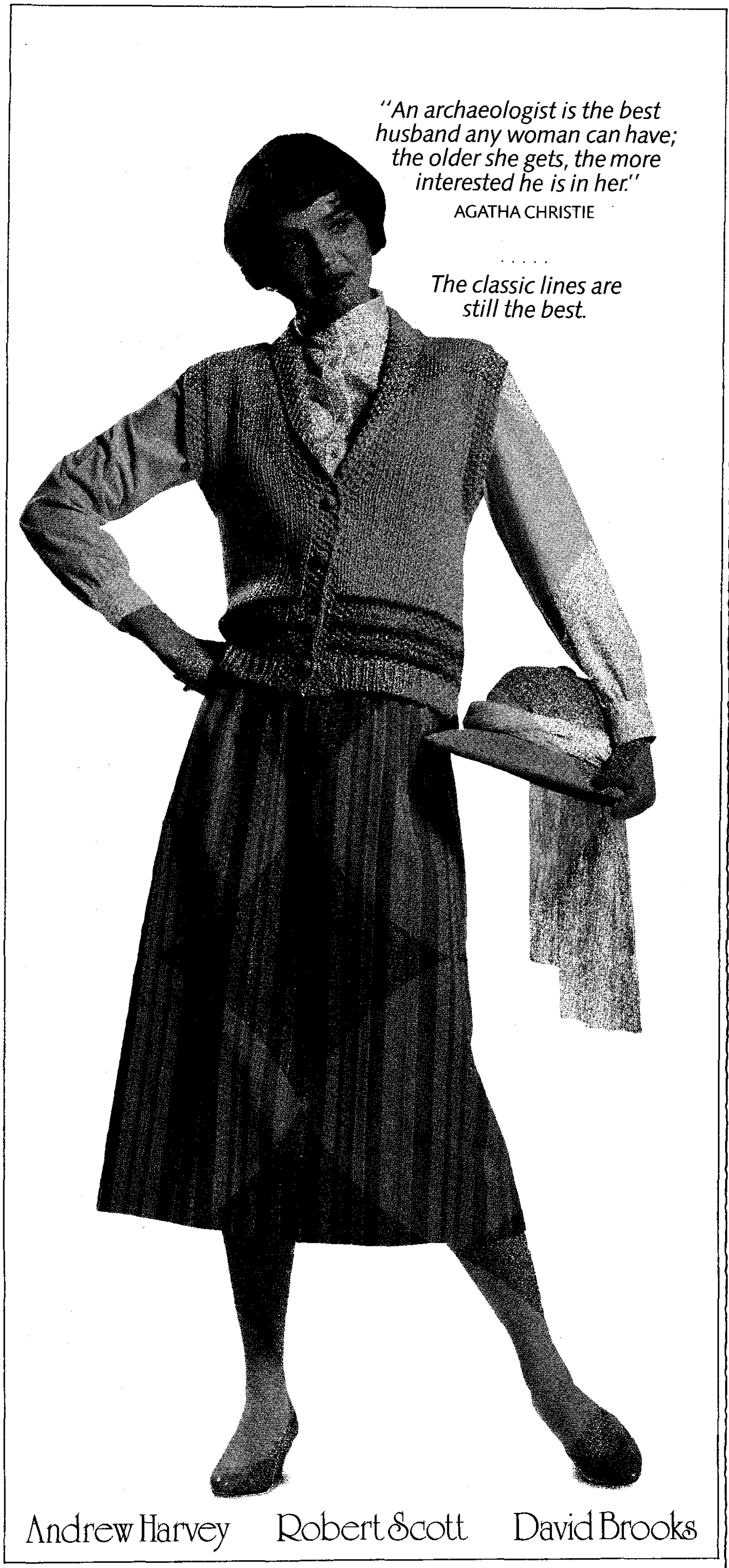

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years, became a rural monument to misguided dreams of glory—in short, a bust, a fiscal flop. Everything Dave told me about the place was true. We were the only pilots who landed on its magnificent runway that November day in 1981.

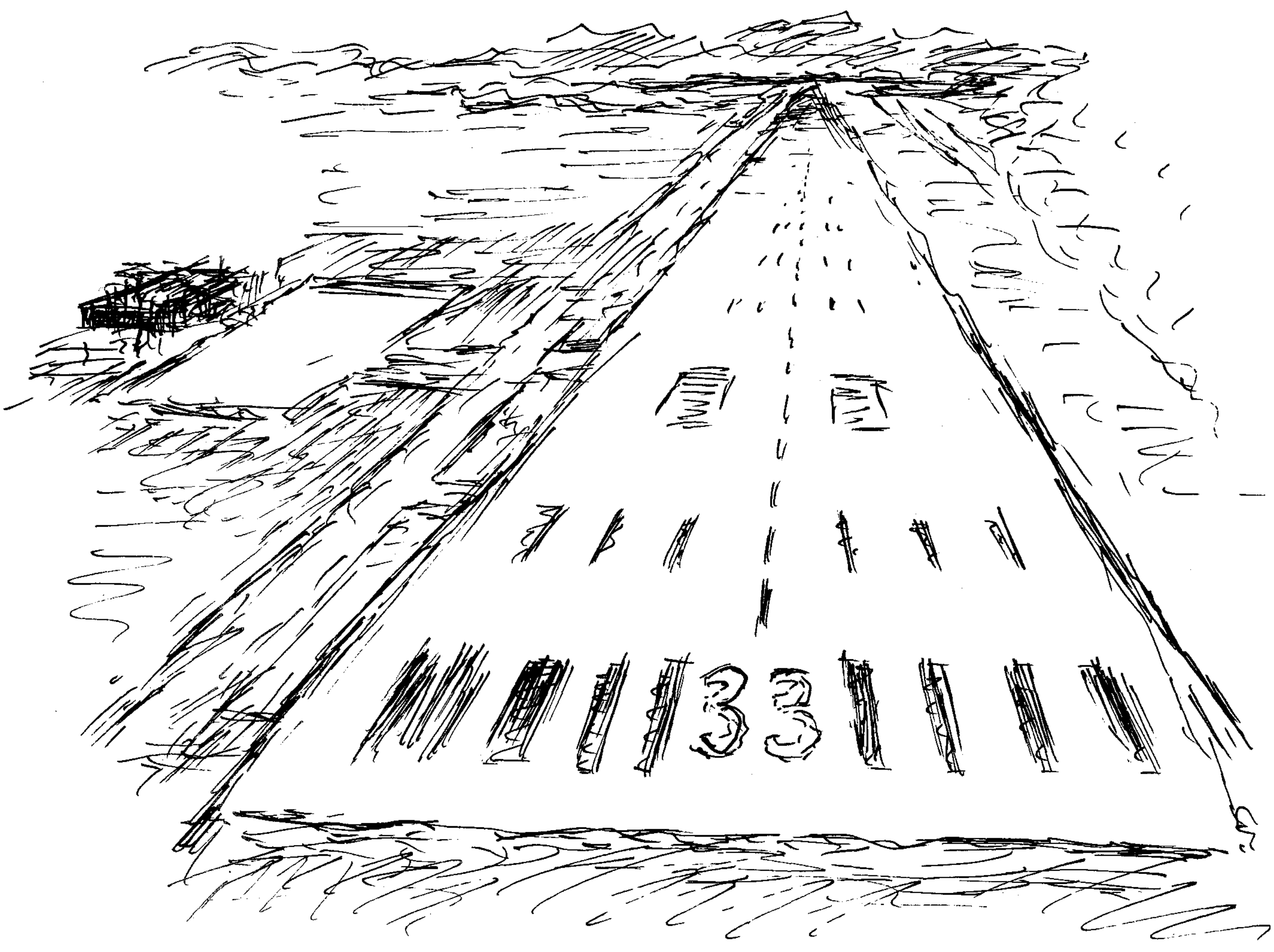
Following our Stormville trip, I told Ed about the Sullivan County International phenomenon and suggested that it was a good place to go for our second excursion, but this time in a heavier, more powerful four-seater—a Cessna 172 Skyhawk. "Physically, it's not exactly a small airport," I said, "but in terms of traffic they don't come much smaller." Ed was interested, and we made plans to fly there.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 1983. The day we pick is cold and clear, but one meteorological factor bothers me: the wind is coming gustily out of the west. When I file my flight plan, by telephone, with the Poughkeepsie Flight Service Station, the man on duty there tells me that the winds aloft are as strong as forty-four knots from the direction of 270 at six thousand feet, and the surface wind at Sullivan County International is from 260 at ten knots, with gusts to twenty-five knots. We'll be flying west to Sullivan County at forty-five hundred feet in a sturdy, peppy Skyhawk, N5277E, so the head wind shouldn't be too much of a problem, but landing on the single long runway could be a headache. That runway is 15-33, and we'll be using the 33 end, heading into the north more than into the west; in other words, we'll be experiencing an erratic, blustery crosswind from the left upon landing. When I mention this to my friend Gene Robinson, who operates the Sadler Aero Center, he tells me not to worry. "They got so much runway at Sullivan County, it'll take you half the day just to taxi up to the tie-down area," he says.

The surface wind at Danbury is straight down Runway 26 at a steady ten knots. No trouble at all. We take off easily, after activating the flight plan with the Danbury tower, and climb to forty-five hundred feet. Ed says he likes the roominess and stability of the Skyhawk after his trip in the Cessna 152. I had briefed him earlier on the wonders of avionic navigation—the Very High Frequency Omnidirectional Range stations, or VORs, which we'll be using as a check against our pilotage and dead reckoning—and he is fascinated by the electronic magic of it all. Our first big checkpoint is the rather conspicuous

Hudson River, at Beacon, and soon afterward there looms the sprawling former Stewart Air Force Base, now a state-owned commercial airport. I call in to the Stewart tower to inform the controllers that I am passing through their control zone, and we press on toward the Catskills ahead. We're making good time in the 172 despite the head wind, but there's some moderate turbulence at the leeward side of the mountains. The airplane rides it well. Some cotton-ball cumulus clouds hang high and unthreatening west of the mountains. The resort hotels, golf courses, race tracks, lakes, and highways stand out like beacons below, even in the weak November sunlight. There are the Concord Hotel, Grossinger's, and what look like a hundred imitators; then, dead ahead, a landmark that is astonishing even from twenty miles away—the Sullivan County International Airport.

Ed whistles when he spots it. "It's just the way you described it," he says. "What's it doing there? It should be in New Jersey, or someplace like that."



I call the Sullivan County Unicom on the unusually quiet 122.80 and announce my intention of landing on the active runway, saying that I presume it is 33. Indeed it is, a blasé male voice radios back, adding, "Gusts to twenty-five knots from two-six-zero." That's a healthy crosswind, classified as Force 6 on the Beaufort Wind Scale—just below a moderate gale. Ed understands my concern and concentration. He stares straight ahead as we descend for a long final approach and crab into the wind. Soon, we see alongside the runway the VASI—the Visual Approach Slope Indicator, whose red-and-white high-intensity lights behind louvres guide a pilot to the ideal glide path for a particular runway. The lights show up to us as red over white, meaning, in the aviation mnemonic, "You're all right." The rest of the mnemonic is "White over white, fly all night" and "Red over red, you're dead." I repeat the charming rhyme to Ed, by way of explanation and to ease the tension. He is enlightened but not calmed.

As our red-over-white glide path takes us closer to the end of Runway 33, I find that I must crab more acutely to the left in order to hold our ground track—the wind is as strong as that. The length of the runway—continuing on, it seems, to the ends of the earth—is no longer a joke; it is a welcome mat of immense value on this crosswindy day. I am thankful for every inch of it. I persist with the heavy left crab until just before touching down, and then I straighten out the airplane's nose to coincide with the runway's centerline, dipping the left wing so we won't be blown over. We hit the asphalt on the left wheel and bounce into the air, veering right. I add a little power and reduce the landing flaps (the former to gain more control, the latter to reduce lift and put the weight on the wheels, not the wings), but the valiant, hard-pressed Skyhawk still veers right, a few feet off the ground. We are caught in the middle of a vicious gust. I consider giving it the gun and going around again—a wise consideration at a lesser airport—but there is so much runway ahead and to the side that I decide to keep easing the airplane down to the ground, with more left aileron and judicious additions and subtractions of power. Just when I am beginning to wish that I were somewhere—anywhere—else, we settle unsteadily onto the extreme right side of the broad runway, all three wheels more or less on the ground. I taxi the airplane toward the tie-down area near the terminal building. Ed is whey-faced, and I *feel* whey-faced. "Thank God for big runways at small airports," I say. Ed concurs with a loud exhalation. We have arrived, in one piece. A good landing is one you can walk away from, Dave Smith always said.

Slowly, the effect of the dicey landing wears off, and we begin to absorb the "Twilight Zone" atmosphere of the place. I can't decide which is spookier—our arrival or our destination. After we've chocked the wheels of the shivering Skyhawk and attached tie ropes to the wings, we walk, bent against the cold wind, toward the terminal building. Not a soul stirs on this vast, flat moonscape. The only sounds are the caterwauling gusts and the furious snapping of an American flag on its pole in front of the main building. I make a point of counting the vehicles of various sorts within my view: sixteen tied-down small airplanes, one of which is ours; two fuel trucks; two cars in a parking lot, probably belonging to airport employees. That's it.

Outside the terminal building, everything is pristine and well maintained. A burnished metal plaque on a slate wall proclaims that this is indeed Sullivan County International Airport, dedicated on June 27, 1970, and financed by the Federal Aviation Administration and a capital grant from the State of New York, County of Sullivan. It also lists all the members of the Sullivan County Board of Supervisors and the Airport Commission, most of whom would probably just as soon not have their names so prominently displayed on this colossal white elephant. A chain-link fence with an open gate faces the broad, empty tarmac. A sign on the gate reads "Gate 1 Passengers Only," but there are no passengers.

Once inside the building and out of the cold, Ed and I take inventory of what we see, our hushed conversation echoing embarrassingly in the ghostly waiting room. We see more plaques and more signs for nonexistent passengers, baggage-sorting bays, ticket counters, a fine slate floor, padded chairs, a free telephone service to the local resorts, placards and pamphlets for automobile rentals and tourist attractions, photographs and paintings of aviation themes, and, somehow most disheartening, yards of empty coatracks. It is as handsome an airport as any medium-sized city in the land could wish for. One of the ticket counters has been given over to a sign-in desk for visiting pilots. I sign in and make use of a direct phone line to the Poughkeepsie Flight Service Station in order to close my flight plan. The F.S.S. man asks me if I experienced any difficulties.

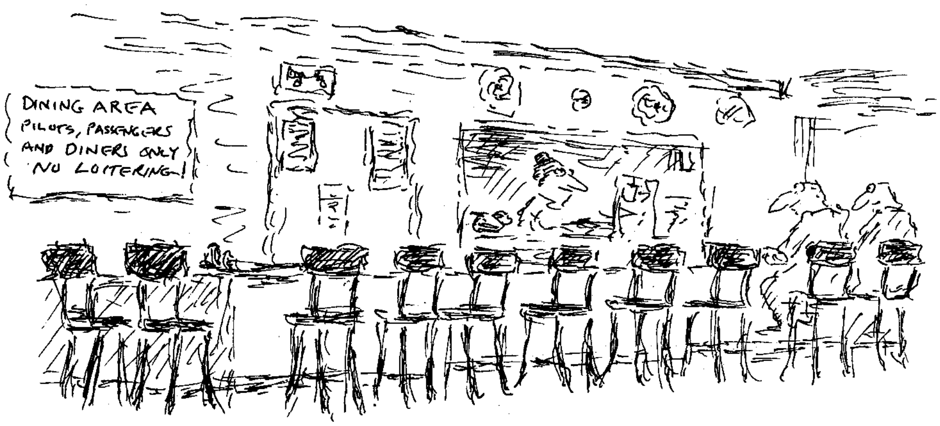
"A bit of a crosswind landing at Sullivan," I answer with insouciance.

"I'm not surprised," he says.

A dogleg off the waiting room provides space for a small restaurant, some video games, cigarette and Coke machines, and lavatories. A sign on the wall reads:

Dining Area
Pilots, Passengers
and Diners Only
No Loitering!

Ed and I seat ourselves at the counter—we're pilot and passenger, and potential diners, but we feel like loiterers. At last, there is a sign of human life: a wan but pleasant-faced woman, her hair arranged in a bun, appears from the kitchen. She regards us with matronizing amusement, as if we were lost children. "You just fly in?" she asks. "Must've been windy. I can hear it howling. What'll you have?"



Ed orders fried eggs and coffee; I order a grilled-cheese-and-bacon sandwich and coffee. She retreats to the kitchen and starts cooking—chef as well as waitress.

The food arrives quickly, and it is good. I ask our waitress if it is always this quiet at Sullivan County International.

She sighs, shakes her head, and says, "Never gets busy, even in summer. Some student pilots come on cross-country flights, but if there's haze or too much wind on this side of the mountains they go into Wurtsboro, instead. Some years back, there was Ransome Airlines here, which went to New York City and Philadelphia, and also a Canadian airline. But they don't come here anymore. The baggage rooms haven't been used since then, I don't think. When they built this airport, they thought people would fly in from all over, but people prefer to drive up here. We're too close to the city, I guess. Not much charter service, either, although some private planes with celebrities come in from time to time, usually during election campaigns. We've had Walter Mondale, Mayor Koch, Governor Cuomo, and some corporate jets with bigwigs who speak at conventions and such at the hotels. There's pictures of them on the bulletin board over on the wall. Some people tried to make the county close us down, because of the expense, but since the federal government put up so much money for the airport, to pay them back would cost twice as much as it does to keep the place open. It's not my full-time job here or I'd go broke. I do painting, too."

As we finish our food, an elderly man and woman, both puffing on cigarettes, shuffle in from the main parking-lot entrance. They seem to know the waitress well and are apparently regular customers. They settle themselves at a Formica table, order coffee, and pass the time of day with the waitress. "Loiterers," I whisper to Ed. We pay for the food (very reasonable) and amble onward, hoping to find more signs of life. A door marked "U.S. Customs Available" is locked tight, but the sound of radio static crackles from the airport administration office next door. We knock, enter, and introduce ourselves to a broody, mustached man sitting behind the

Unicom microphone and surrounded by consoles, meteorological indicators, and maps. He is John Lorino, a member of the airport staff and also a weather observer for the Poughkeepsie F.S.S. He whiles away the inactive hours chain-smoking cigarettes and drinking coffee, he says. An outer door opens, and another man, also mustached but younger, appears. He is Tom Nicoletti, a maintenance man for the airport.

I ask them how many people are on the staff.

"Normally, there are two of us on duty during the day—one in the office and one on general maintenance," Lorino says. "At night, we have a security guard, who also knows how to use the Unicom. And then there's the woman at the restaurant, but she's private, not county. Of course, we've got aircraft mechanics over at the hangar, but they're private, too. This time of year, it's dead around here."

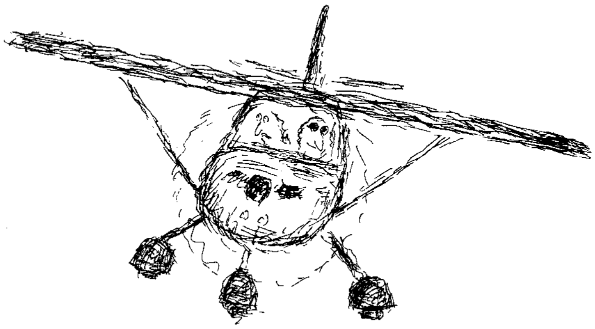
"Does it ever get what you'd call busy?" I ask.

"Oh, in the summer we have student pilots and corporate airplanes flying in, and last summer we had a commuter service going from Albany to here," Lorino answers. "That's the Tri-State Airlines outfit, which has a ticket counter outside. They're not running now. They also fly scheduled flights from Albany to Newark, New Bedford, Martha's Vineyard, Hartford, and so forth, but not from here anymore. When Canadian charters come down, we alert U.S. Customs, and they drive over and give them inspections. Sometimes in the summer, we get a charter flight every week. When we first opened, we used to have regular scheduled flights from Toronto, but there wasn't enough business, so they pulled up stakes. Also, general aviation has pretty much fizzled out, and that really hurt us. When Labor Day comes, we pull in the sidewalks. It's a big waste. We're one of the nicest facilities in the state, but we don't get much use. There was once talk of putting in a Federal Aviation Administration tower here. They don't talk about that anymore."

A pilot calls in on the Unicom. Lorino checks his gauges and radios back, "Active is Three-three, wind two-eighty at fourteen knots, gusting to twenty-five." The pilot decides to land elsewhere.

Nicoletti says, "We're awful high up, so we get our windy days, as you guys know. That pilot will probably go into Wurtsboro, where it's less windy. Hell, it's a damn shame. We could handle everything but a Boeing 747 here. What we really need is gambling in Sullivan County, like in Atlantic City. Then things would be hopping. The state probably missed the boat on that one, though. They'll have gambling in the Poconos before we have it. We're all praying for gambling. It's our last hope."

The twenty-five-knot gusts generously abate for our takeoff. We are in the air and turning toward Danbury before we have covered half the runway. Just east of the Hudson, I let Ed take the yoke of the Skyhawk for a minute. He is like a boy with his first bicycle, joyously encountering the giddy feeling of absolute control. At one point in his excitement, an invisible ripple of turbulence causes the Skyhawk to drop fifty feet or so, and Ed releases the yoke to me as if it were on fire.



"Did I do something wrong?" he asks.

I assure him that he is blameless—it is just aviation's equivalent of the camouflaged pothole in the road. "One of those things," I tell him. "You just learn to ride with it. We'll be home in no time with this tailwind"—and we are, safe and sound.

THERE is something about an island. Whether one travels to an island by water, by causeway, or by air, the getting there is special—occasionally even more so than the island itself. It's an adventure, it's different, it's fun. For me, piloting an airplane to an island is more fun than getting there some other way. If the weather is good, visual navigation is disarmingly simple. An island just sits out there, its sharp outline ringed by water, rocks, and sand. You have to be a fool to miss it. And flying is efficient and quick—no missed ferries, no crowds, no traffic jams. As the Cessna Skyhawk flies, it takes about fifty minutes to get from Danbury to, say, Block Island; by car and ferry, it can take the better part of a day.

I knew from experience that Block Island—officially, the town of New Shoreham, Rhode Island—has a quaint little airport, which is barely adequate for the summer-tourism demand but is a relaxed place in the off-season. It was for this reason—and because the Block Island State Airport is so different in size and essence from the Sullivan County International Airport—that Ed and I decided to fly to the seven-mile-long isle of greenery and sand, situated halfway between Long Island's Montauk Point and the Rhode Island coastline, before the summer people descended. Throughout a persistently wretched winter that spilled into early spring, we scheduled three flights to Block Island and had to cancel them all at the last minute: bad weather, bad weather, and more bad weather.

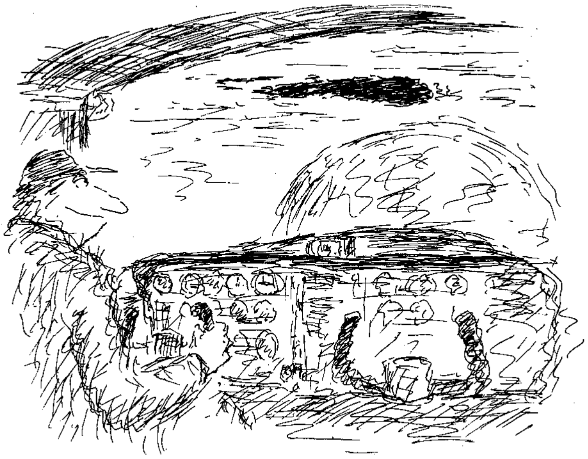
FRIDAY, MAY 18, 1984. At last, on this day in mid-May, everything is right for the trip. Early in the morning, I telephone the Poughkeepsie F.S.S. briefer, and he tells me, "It's a perfect day. No precip till after midnight. Block Island reports light and variable surface winds, with at least twenty miles visibility. That's great for Block Island. The wind aloft at three thousand feet is from the north—three-five-zero at eighteen knots." Sounds terrific. I file a flight plan (an especially good idea when one is flying over open water) and do my preflight calculations. With the moderate wind aloft coming from the north, there should be a slight crosswind as we head east toward Block Island—perhaps more of a tailwind than a crosswind. That will speed up our time en route. The truly good luck is the sparkling visibility and the light surface wind at the Block Island State Airport. That field, as the briefer suggested, has a notorious reputation for troublesome fog or haze and howling surface winds, which are usually at variance to the disturbingly short single runway. Pilots refer to the airport as "the crosswind-landing capital of the world." I had enough crosswind-landing practice at Sullivan County International to hold me for a while.

When Ed and I meet at the Danbury Airport at eight-thirty, we congratulate each other on our meteorological good fortune. Our rented Skyhawk is once again N5277E, a trusted friend to both of us. Her fuel tanks are topped off, and she looks eager to fly. We are also eager to fly, but we do a careful preflight check. Everything checks out to perfection, complementing the weather. The Danbury ground controller assigns us Runway 08 (it hardly makes any difference what runway we use, the surface wind is so light); I activate the flight plan; and off we go. Ed says it's good to be flying again after a five-and-a-half-month hiatus.

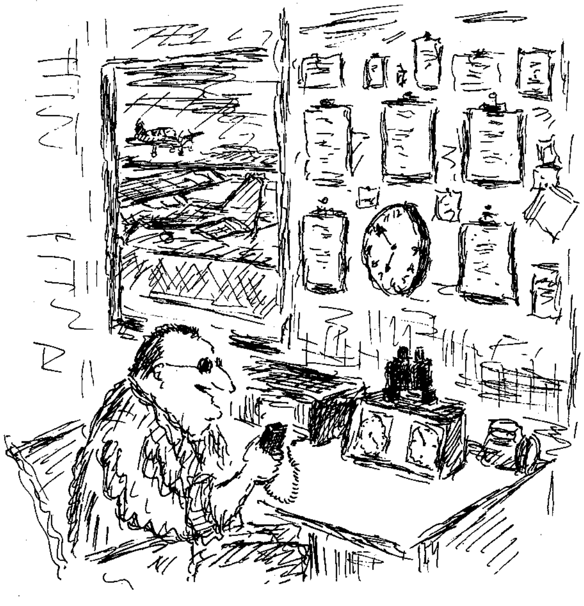
We leave the Danbury traffic pattern and pick up a magnetic heading of 101, which compensates for the northerly tailwind-crosswind. Over Bethel, Connecticut, we reach our cruising altitude of three thousand five hundred feet, and Ed, agog at the sunny clarity of the sky above and the world below, has to force himself to perform his cockpit chores: he times our flight between the first two checkpoints—Route 25 and the Housatonic River, a distance of seven nautical miles—and calculates on my Jeppesen CSG-9 nonelectronic flight computer that our ground speed is a hundred and five knots, exactly as was predicted. He's getting good at that stuff. We pass over the ensuing checkpoints, and when I radio the Tweed–New Haven tower the controller says we have clear, nearly trafficless flying through his control zone. The aesthetics of this flight on this day are positively breathtaking: the terrain greening in the tardy spring; the Bridgeport–New Haven area thickening into a manufactured marvel; Long Island Sound revealing itself in luminous blue. Over Clinton, Connecticut, halfway to our objective, we can easily make out Fishers Island and, on the horizon, Block Island. Nearer and in sharper focus are the odd hook of land marking the mouth of the Connecticut River, at Old Saybrook; the beach at Niantic; and the gray shipyards of New London. The air is like silk. The airplane practically flies herself. We are entranced.

South of Stonington and Fishers Island we see pleasure boats pushing the season this fine day, and then, all at once, a reminder of the less placid real world—a fat, black, sinister nuclear-powered submarine, inside the circular wake of its tender. Like so many instruments of war, it has a strange, chilling beauty. We both whistle softly and sigh. But there, over the nose, is Block Island, a piece of jade set in the shimmering Atlantic.

The submarine is forgotten, and we start thinking about our approach to the airport. Twenty nautical miles of open sea lie between us and the glistening island, and I am moved to ask Ed, "By the way, can you swim?" Ed is not markedly amused. At about ten miles out, just opposite Montauk Point, I radio the Block Island Unicom, giving my identification number and position, and requesting landing information. A friendly, low voice replies that the traffic is light, the wind is very light, and the active runway is 28. I thank the voice and begin letting down to a thousand feet, so that we will enter the downwind leg at the proper pattern altitude. This means coming in over the ocean south of the island, turning left to a base leg over the South East lighthouse, and then turning left again for the final approach to Runway 28, announcing my position on each leg. The procedure neatly mirrors the flight—smooth and effortless and inspiring. Ed is already blithely sightseeing, spotting the harbor front and the beaches. The landing itself is as easy and soft as a settling feather. We are down on Shangri-La. It has been an exquisite fifty minutes.



The friendly, low voice on the Unicom tells us to tie down anywhere on the tarmac—there's plenty of room. We park near a few other light airplanes, tie down, and walk to the administration building, enjoying the clean salt air. The building, which looks like a typical Block Island cottage—weathered shingles, white trim, and studied New England primness—is office, waiting room, and luncheonette combined. A few people are waiting for a scheduled New England Airlines flight to Westerly, on the mainland, and a waitress in the luncheonette sips from a cup of coffee. At the office counter, I close my flight plan by telephone and sign the visiting pilots' register. Inside the office, before a console, sits the owner of the friendly, low voice—a beefy, bespectacled, crewcut man, wearing rumpled jeans and a blue shirt. Ed and I introduce ourselves, and the man tells us that he is John Brain, the airport manager. The traffic in and around the airport is still light, so we chat with almost no interruptions.



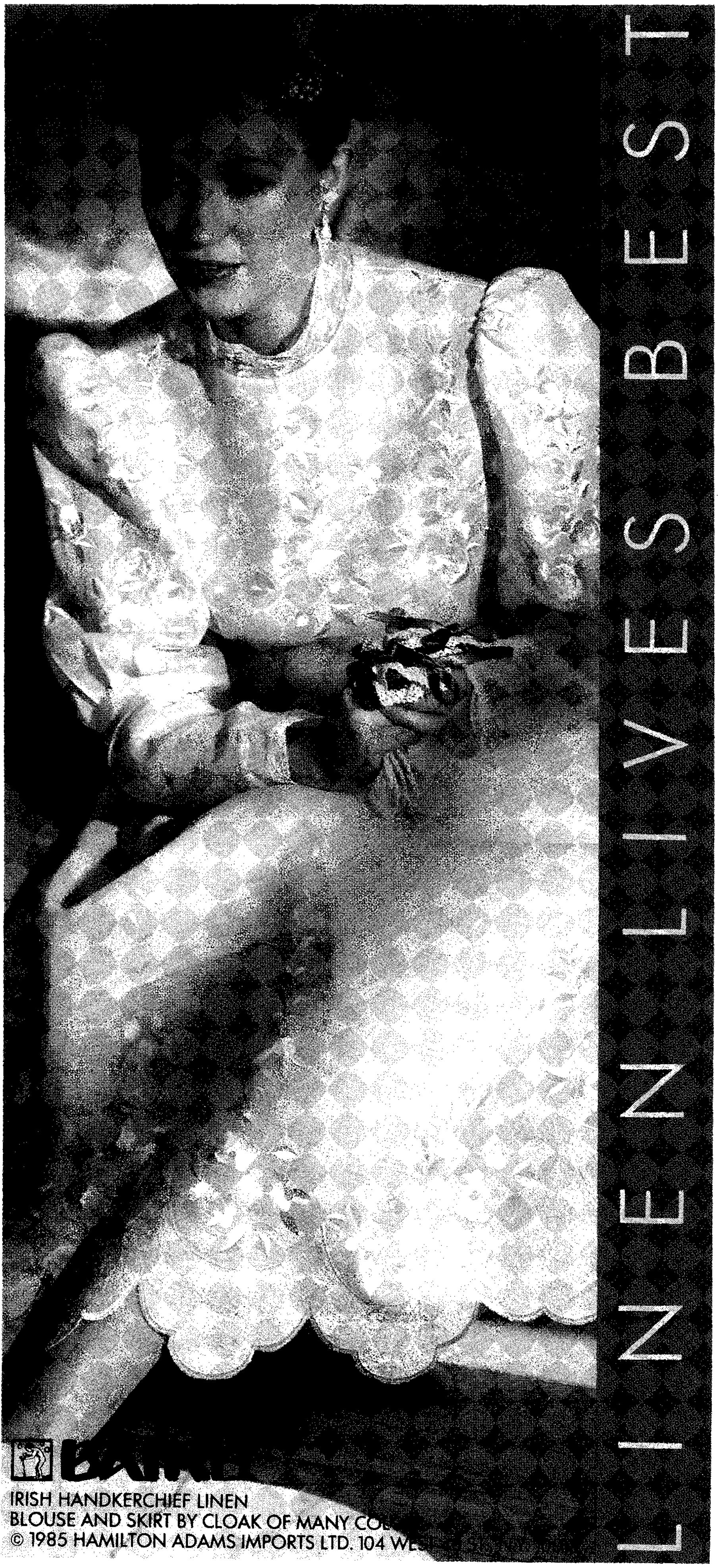
"I've been on the job here for eighteen years, after doing a little bit of everything—except the Army, because they didn't want me," Brain says. "I'm a born-and-bred Rhode Islander and almost a born-and-bred *Block* Islander, since I came here from Providence when I was only two years old. I guess you could say I'm a native, although some people on the island would argue. Besides me, there should be seven other employees for the airport, but we're down three—retirements and a termination. The airport is open twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, and, being shorthanded right now, we have only one person on every shift, except on weekends. We all do everything around here, no matter what our official position is—the Unicom, security, plowing snow, you name it. A new man is starting next week, and hopefully we'll have enough personnel for the busy season coming up."

I ask Brain about the airport's history.

"Well, the state opened the place in 1950," he says. "Before that, there was a big grass field here, and the pilots back then used to land on it informally. In 1966, when I started working, the airport was O.K. for the summer-season traffic, but lately we've been discovered. Nowadays, the runway is too short for the larger airplanes that would like to put in, and we should have another runway for the wind changes. But the state can't get the land now to extend the runway or build another one. They could have once, but now, as I say, we've been discovered. Every grain of sand is worth something on Block Island. If you own land here, it's just a matter of how bad you want to sell it and how bad someone wants to buy it."

Brain is interrupted by a pilot's voice calling in on the Unicom frequency. He wants to know what the active runway is and what the wind conditions are. Brain studies his gauges and radios back that what little surface wind there is comes from the northeast now, so the active is Runway 10—the opposite end of 28, which we landed on. "That breeze out there has turned around two or three times already this morning, but it's so light it hardly matters," Brain tells us. "Not many days are this good. We got a certain fame for fog, a wicked crosswind, and that short runway. Some of the hotter airplanes don't make it. I've seen them go over and under the runway, on both ends. Most just about make it. A Cessna Citation jet landed here once, and it just squeaked in. Very little room for error. In times of serious fog, we're still here but the pilots can't find us. They're building a VOR out on the field, but that won't change things much. We'll still be hard to find in the fog."

Ed wonders aloud how many residents of the island have their own airplanes, and Brain answers that there are thirty-six, almost all of them



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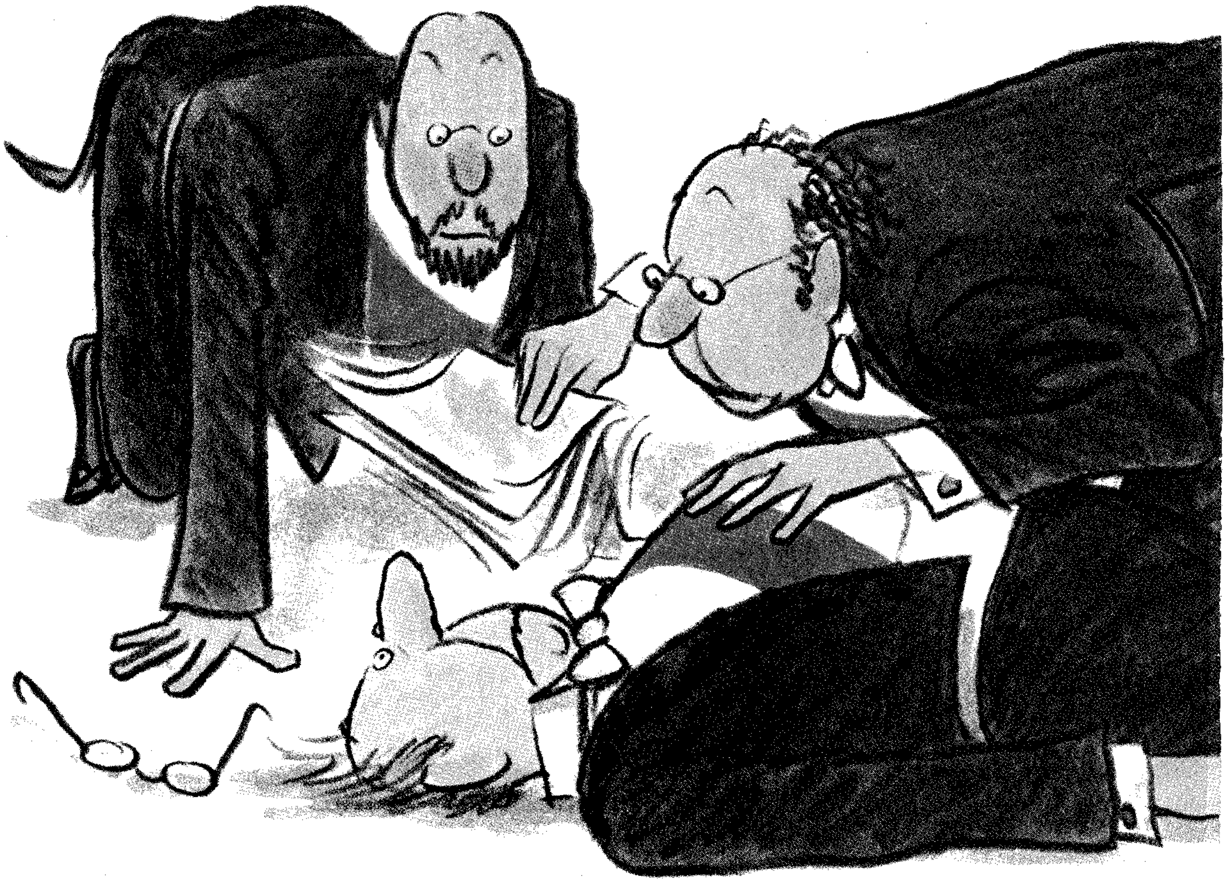

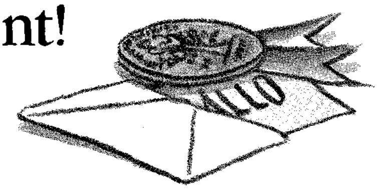

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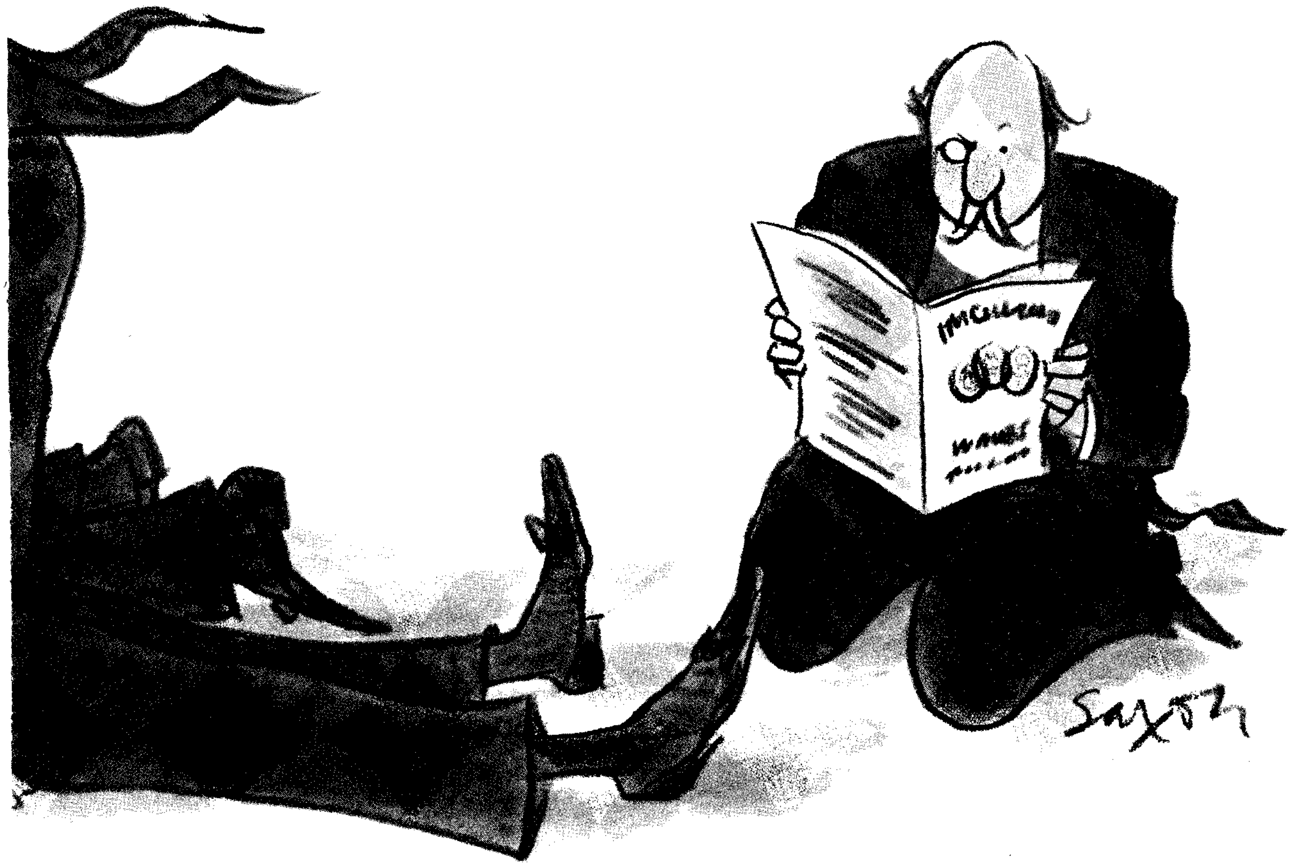

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weekend and summer people. "We got no hangar space available, so they just tie down," he says. "Across the road from the airport, out front there, is a whole mess of beat-up cars. They belong to people who have houses on the island and who fly in one way or another and then use their wrecks to drive from the airport to their houses and back again. After a while, the cars don't start anymore, and so they leave them there to rust. The permanent population is six or seven hundred, but in the summer—well, it's anybody's guess. Thousands and thousands. The ferryboats arrive and two or three thousand people get off. Then the airplanes come in—the private ones, the charters, and the New England Airlines flights—and there are more thousands. The season should begin any good weekend now—maybe this one, although Memorial Day is the usual start of the season. People sometimes come here only for one day. We get a lot of pleasure boats, too, mostly for sport fishing. Some record sport fish are in these waters, like sixty- or seventy-pound striped bass. This used to be the swordfish center of America, but very few are being caught these days. You see advertised on the mainland 'Block Island swordfish,' but they're not really from here."

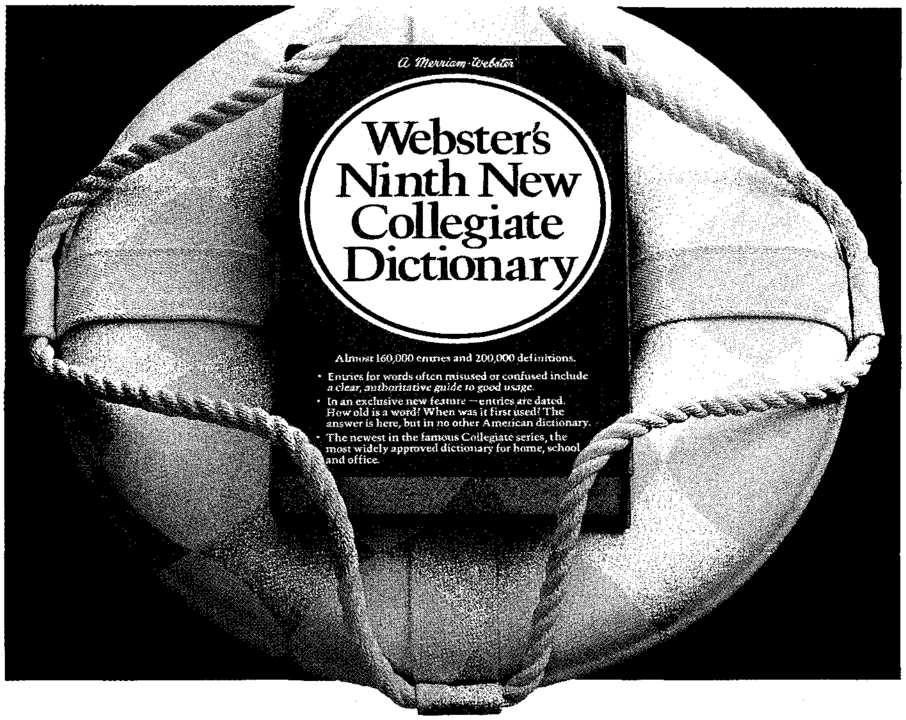
The talk about fish has given me an ineluctable craving for fried clams, the dish I most associate with Block Island. I ask Brain what restaurant in town he'd recommend.

"The choice is very limited," he says. "About the only place open now is Finn's, down by the harbor. Most of the restaurants rely on college kids for help, and the colleges aren't over yet, I guess. You can get a cab out front. It's about a mile and a half into town from here."

We thank him and say we're going to look around the airport a little more before going into town, my appetite for fried clams notwithstanding. A yellow-and-white Cessna 152 has just landed and is tied down next to our airplane. The pilot and his passenger, both young men, are signing the register at the counter. They tell us that they have flown in from Providence to lunch with a Block Island friend. "A joy ride," the passenger says. "It's such a beautiful day we said, 'What the hell, let's go to Block Island.' "

Ed is mightily impressed. "Ah, America," he says to me. "People fly off to Block Island just for lunch. Some life!"

We explore the airport grounds.



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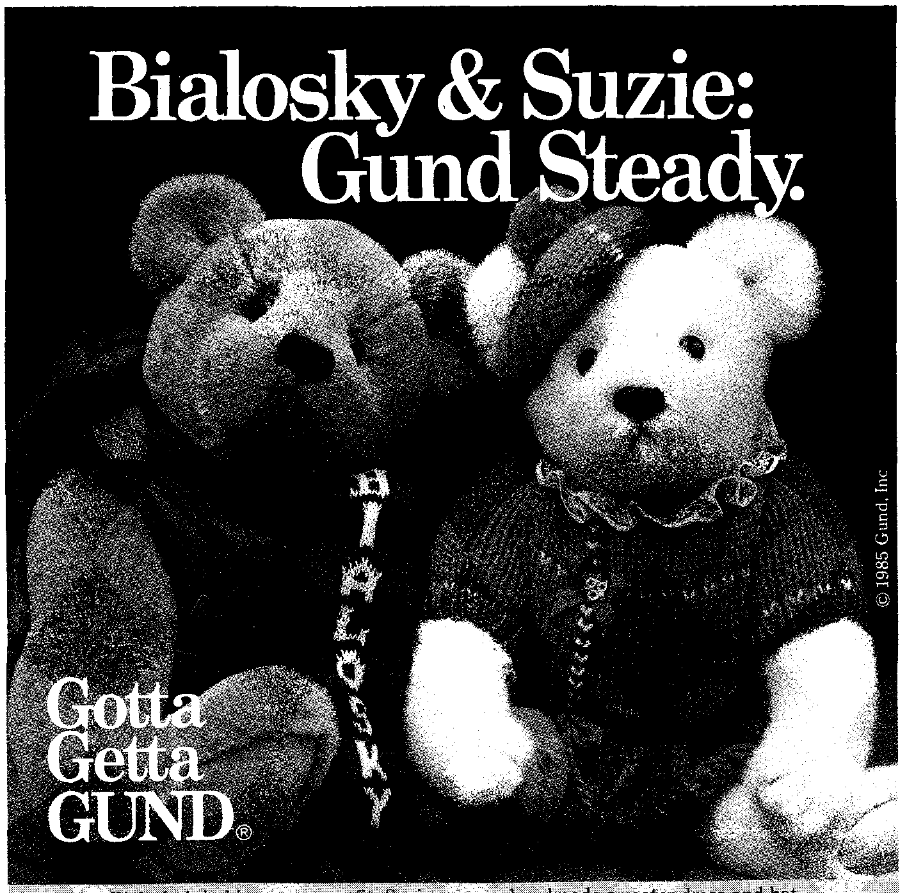

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The other buildings—a repair hangar and a shed for a fire truck and a small bulldozer—are also in the weathered-shingle saltbox style of architecture. The over-all effect is not so much of an airport as of an unpretentious New England estate. In the hangar, a young mechanic is at work on a green-and-white six-seat Piper Cherokee while a radio disgorges WNBC rock. The mechanic's name is Rick Jutras, and he works for New England Airlines, maintaining its fleet of airplanes, which include twin-engine Britten-Norman Islanders, Cherokee 6s, and a souped-up Cessna Skyhawk. Jutras takes a break from his work to shoot the breeze—something that most mechanics like to do as much as pilots and airport managers. "It's a one-man operation here, with me as the one man," he tells us. "If the job's too big, it's done on the mainland, at Westerly. I lived on the island for a year and a half, but now I commute back and forth every day from the mainland. Since I work for New England Airlines, they commute me for free. I've been stuck out here only a couple of times during the winter, because of the weather. It's beautiful on the island, but in winter it's just plain dull. I always say that this is the airport with the best view in America—especially on a day like today. It's usually about ten degrees cooler than on the mainland, and there's always some wind, because there's nothing to stop it, really. You know about our crosswinds. I've seen some doozers here, too. Some pilots come out of their airplanes shaking like leaves. Even *our* pilots, and they know this place better than anyone. It's rougher coming in on Runway Two-eight, with that little valley there, which makes the wind go nuts. Today's a piece of cake, though. There aren't many days like today."

I ask Jutras if the bulldozer we saw is for plowing snow.

"Hey, Kenny, do we get any snow here?" he yells at a passing maintenance man.

"Snow?" answers Kenny. "What's that? No, we did get about eleven inches in one storm this past winter, but it doesn't really hang around long enough to plow much, which is why we have such a small plow. It's like the Cape—the snow's usually gone by noon. But we make up for it with rain, fog, and wind."

Jutras contemplates his workplace with pride. "You know, what I'd actually like to do is get me a sweet little airplane, so I could commute back and forth myself," he says. "I'm trying to talk my wife into us buying an Aeronca 7AC that I know is for sale, but she doesn't want to hear about it. This guy I know wants to sell a beauty—with wide-tread tires, so you can put it down just about anywhere. It'd be great if I could raise the dough and convince the wife. Someday, someday. Maybe I can get hold of an old wreck and fix it up myself, sort of as a hobby. Maybe."

The prospect of succulent fried clams reasserts itself like a holy vision. Ed and I walk around to the front of the main building to find a cab. The sight of the acre or so of junk cars fascinates Ed, and he immediately begins to sketch them from different perspectives. A scarred 1979 Volvo is the latest model present; the others are a mélange of salt-eroded, crumpled Fords, Chevrolets, and Jeeps from the nineteen-fifties and sixties, parked higgledy-piggledy on the beach grass. A grizzled cabdriver, sunglasses glinting under his baseball cap, shouts at us from his vehicle, "Want to buy a car, fellas? Every one of them is for sale, real cheap. It's free parking right now, but there's talk that they're going to be charged thirty dollars a year for the privilege. You won't see many around then, and maybe I can get more cab fares."

We hire the driver to take us into town. "Yeah," he continues as we ride along the empty road, "you wouldn't think there were that many people for all those cars, would you? In the winter, though, not much happens. I just take care of my wife. She's an invalid. We people who live here have to work here. Too expensive to commute to the mainland. We make do, though." The taxi passes a vaneless modern windmill by the side of the road. "Our electricity comes from diesel generators, so the government and some private folks thought they'd try these windmills. It's a great spot for windmills, but it didn't work out. During our last big storm, the blades flew right off that thing. My light bill is still as high as ever."

Ed and I get off on Water Street, along the harbor front. All around us are the sights and sounds of fixing up for the season—hammering, painting, sawing, window-cleaning. The National Hotel is displaying a new façade and looks almost antiseptic. We dine alfresco at Finn's, by the ferry slip. As some low cumulus clouds march in from the mainland, I feast on dreamy fried clams, French fries, and a large

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Pepsi while Ed enjoys fish and chips with a beer. The beer looks particularly good to me, but I have more flying to do today. The other customers are two women in tennis garb and three shirt-sleeved executives apparently on a business trip. The setting is serene and idyllic. Then, at twelve-fifteen, the ferry from Point Judith arrives with a blast of its whistle. Surprisingly, it is jammed with passengers, vehicles, and freight.

"Here they come," our waitress says. "The season has begun."

Indeed it has. The passengers are mostly college kids, swarming from the ferry on foot, mopeds, and bicycles, and in painted jalopies. Their baggage seems to be limited to scuba gear, surfboards, and guitars. They are presumably the summer help, fresh from final exams and ready for anything. The idyllic scene fades along with the sun, which is suddenly blocked by the cumulus clouds. Ed sees me studying the sky and says that maybe we should get back to the airport. I agree.

By the time I file a flight plan at the airport, the cumulus clouds—so fluffy and picturesque a half hour earlier—have merged into a low overcast. The Bridgeport F.S.S. briefer advises that the cloud cover is four thousand feet broken over Block Island Sound and three thousand solid over Danbury. There goes my plan to fly home at four thousand five hundred feet; I'll have to fly at three thousand or less. "The wind's erratic, so it might be a little choppy," the briefer adds. "A front is coming through, about eight hours sooner than predicted." So much for the perfect, glorious day. This is, after all, New England.

Before we depart, we have coffee at the airport luncheonette with Brain. A hand-lettered sign posted over the counter reads: "BUY A BUMPER STICKER AND DONATE TO THE SUPPORT OF OUR BELEAGUERED ISLANDERS $1.50. FREE THE NEW SHOREHAM 13." I ask Brain what the local controversy is all about. He explains that the New Shoreham 13 are thirteen town officials who want the power to regulate the noisy and sometimes dangerous mopeds that invade the island with the summer tourists. The state authorities have refused to take a stand on such regulation, and the moped dealers have filed suit against the locals for harassment. There is even semiserious talk of secession from Rhode Island if nothing is done to control the buzzing bikes. "The natives don't like those mopeds at all, what with all the noise and the accidents they cause," Brain says. "We have no hospital here—only a doctor and a rescue squad—so we're forever having to take the injured from moped accidents to the Westerly hospital. A lot of the ambulance airplanes that put in here are for moped casualties. It's a real big problem."

As we prepare to leave, the clouds seem to be getting thicker and lower by the minute. Brain glances out the window and says, "You should be all right. Nothing much is supposed to happen till later tonight."

"By the way," I say to Brain, "I forgot to ask if you do any flying yourself."

"Nope," Brain answers. "In my eighteen years here, I've flown with others and I know something about it, but I can't get interested. It's a quick way to go from one place to another, but as far as doing it myself—nope."

Ed looks as if he wants to question Brain further about this (does Brain know something we don't know?), but I hurriedly say goodbye, and we head for our airplane. I must guard my passenger's morale.

As predicted, the flight to Danbury is fairly low and choppy. It is also slower than the morning trip, since we're flying against a variable head wind. And it's far less beautiful. But, except for a few lurches and bumps, it is uneventful. At four-thirty, an hour after takeoff from Block Island, the Danbury Airport appears below darkening clouds just over the nose. The tower controller gives us permission for a straight-in approach to Runway 26. With plenty of time to effect a gradual descent to the runway, I manage to perform what is known in the trade as a "greaser"—a landing so gentle that you're not exactly sure when you touch the ground. This pleases Ed and me no end. We are both suddenly weary, but weary with a sense of accomplishment—even if the accomplishment was, essentially, just flying to Block Island for lunch. All in all, it was a lovely day.

FOR our final trip, Ed and I agreed, our destination should be impeccably rural—an authentic diminutive farmer field, a turf strip a long way from anywhere. Since he spends a good deal of time in central Vermont, Ed said that he'd scout the territory for a plausible spot. In short order, he sent me a clipping from the Barre-Montpelier *Times Argus Weekly* about a middle-aged married couple, David and Babs Nutt, who own a tiny farmer field in Post Mills, just across the Connecticut River from New Hampshire. The article indicated that the Nutts were infatuated with their rigorous business and loved flying in all its varieties. An accompanying photograph of the airport and its owners convinced me that Post Mills was ideal for our purposes. I telephoned Babs Nutt and asked if I might fly up to Vermont and chat. "That's fine with David and me," she said. "Now, the field is easy to miss in the green countryside, so look for Lake Fairlee to the northwest and a trotting track to the west. The airport is just between them. And watch out for gliders and ultralights when you're landing—especially if it's a pretty good day."

SUNDAY, JULY 8, 1984. Today is a pretty good day—warm, partly sunny, and with humidity decreasing after a dismal stretch of heavy rains—and I am ready to fly the Skyhawk from Danbury to Post Mills: a flight of a hundred and sixty-two nautical miles, about ninety minutes in the air. Since Ed is already ensconced in Vermont, not far from Post Mills, it seems silly for him to travel south to join me for an immediate trip back north. Instead, we arrange to meet at the Post Mills Airport in the late morning. Just before I am ready to preflight trusty N5277E, I am astonished to learn from Gene Robinson, of the Sadler Aero Center, that his rental airplanes are not insured for solo landings on short turf strips. I accept defeat philosophically: maybe it's just as well, what with the cumulus clouds lowering over the northern hills; maybe I am simply not destined to fly this day. One must accept these little setbacks in general aviation. After phoning the news to Ed, I get into my car and drive for four hours over broad, steamy interstates, straight to Post Mills, Vermont. It's no way to arrive at a small airport, however.

The airport, on the fringe of the hamlet of Post Mills, introduces itself by a suspended sign, illustrated with a Grandma Moses-like aerial-view painting of the Vermont countryside:

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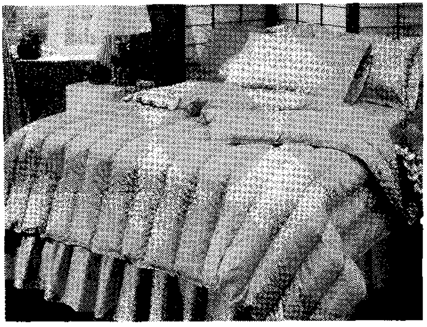
Behind the sign are a surprisingly crowded parking lot, some brown-shingled buildings, a fuel pump, and a few light airplanes and gliders perched beside two grass runways. Since the weather is holding at pretty good, the center of human activity is a redwood picnic table in front of the largest building, which is really a large house. Ed is there, along with some gesturing, gabbing pilots and a blondish, small-featured older man, whom I recognize from the newspaper photograph as David Nutt. Nutt is wearing sneakers, a brown pullover, khaki pants, sunglasses, and a faded-red backless cap with the legend "REGION I SOARING CONTEST" on the visor. To the west, beyond a fence, is the town cemetery, and beyond that is a small ballpark reverberating with shouts and squeals from a Little League baseball game in full throe. It strikes me that, on a wildly reduced scale, Post Mills Airport is situated like La Guardia Airport, which is flanked by a vast Queens cemetery and Shea Stadium.

David Nutt gets up from the picnic table to welcome me. "Babs is down at the other end of the field giving some flight tests to glider pilots," he says. "She's the only federal flight examiner for sailplanes in Vermont, and four people flew up in a Cherokee from Massachusetts this morning for various tests. Let's walk down the strip and watch her, and you can get an idea of what we have here. She's about to take off with one of them in that two-seater Schweizer sailplane." He points to a white blur more than two thousand feet away, at the end of the damp runway.

As Ed and I walk along with him, David tells us something about himself, his wife, and their airport. He is a native of Cleveland and a graduate of Dartmouth (class of 1941), and was a research associate in oceanography at Dartmouth from 1947 to 1981, working much of the time with Vilhjalmur Stefansson, the Arctic explorer and Dartmouth faculty member. David spent the Second World War in the Navy, charting the Pacific and the waters around Greenland. After the war, he returned to Dartmouth, where he worked on a naval-research project and, with Babs, raised a large family. In 1966, when their children were nearly grown, the Nutts, *père* and *mère*, took up flying with a rare passion. They bought the failing Post Mills Airport in 1978 and have been running it together ever since.

"I was a mariner first, brought up under sail," David says. "Flying—especially gliding—is for me really three-dimensional sailing. I'm mostly



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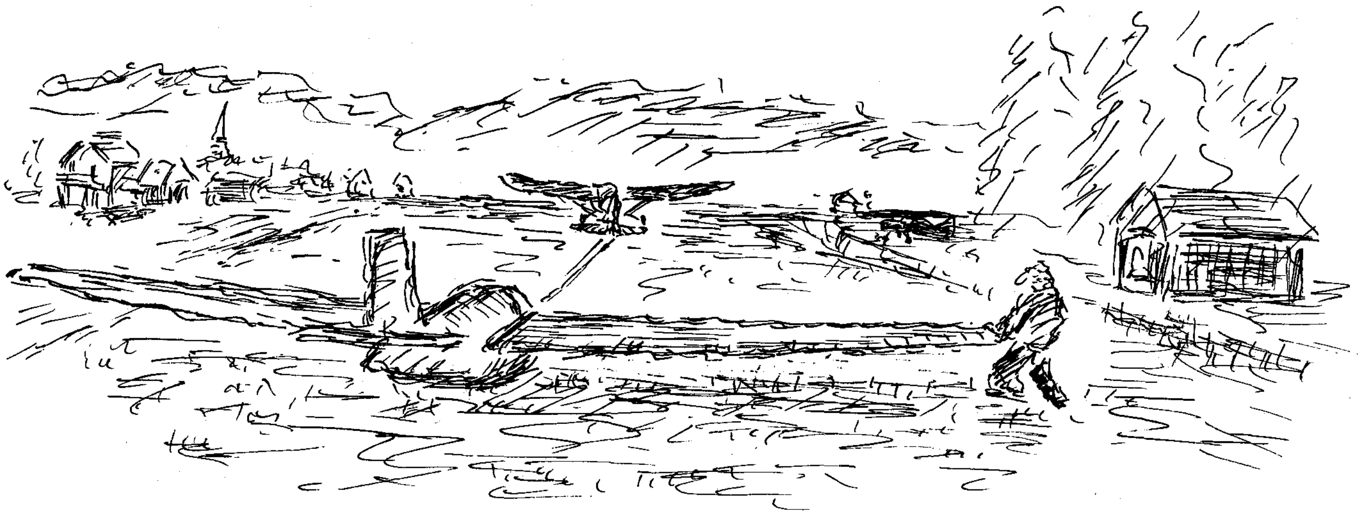
retired now from my professional oceanographic work. I'm so busy with this little airport and an assessing job for the town of Hanover, I can't do it all anymore."

As we stroll along Runway 05-23 toward the parked Schweizer and its tow plane, which are joined by a slack umbilical cord of yellow nonstretch polyester marine rope, David points out the second, longer runway, 04-22, and taxi strip. "On good days, we need all the runway space we can get," he says, "because those gliders can't wait to land, and, with the ultralight and power-aircraft traffic, it's a little hectic around here. So far today, it's been mostly Babs giving her flight tests. She's in the front seat of that Schweizer, and I think she's about to test one of those Massachusetts people for his certified flight instructor's rating in gliders."

We stand off to the side and watch a strapping lad, sporting a magnificent curly blond poll, climb into the tow plane and start the engine. The tow plane, David tells us over its raucous sputter, is a converted Vietnam vet—a Cessna L-19 Bird Dog observation taildragger, kept running with the help of spare parts from here and there. "It's somewhere between being valuable to us as an active tow plane and even more valuable as an antique," he says. "After Vietnam, I think America sold a lot of L-19s and spare parts to Iran, so now it's hard to get what you need to keep them flying. She's a beauty, though, with plenty of power, and we're thankful for that. On a hot day with no wind, it's difficult to pull a glider off the ground without that extra power."



The L-19 taxis out in front of the slightly atilt, sulking glider; the yellow rope tightens, and both aircraft spring to life, churning down Runway 05 into the delicate northerly breeze. Another young man, in a blue T-shirt and jeans, runs alongside the glider steadying the wing. The glider is flying before the tow plane is; then both are up and climbing fast. "Babs and her passenger will release the glider from the tow at about three thousand feet above the field, and on a day like today, with few thermals, they'll probably make about a fifteen-minute flight," David says. "Normally, the instructor is in the rear tandem seat, but this is a test for a potential instructor, so Babs must act the part of the student, seeing how he works as an instructor. They'll do maneuvers on tow, release procedure, stalls, steep turns, and some slow flight. There's no radio contact with the tow plane or the ground. Don't need it on an uncrowded day."

The young man who had steadied the glider's wing now drives up on an orange tractor, and David introduces him. He is Mike Eberhardt; he and the tow-plane pilot, Phil Gerding, make up the permanent airport staff—so permanent, in fact, that they both live in an apartment above the office in the brown-shingled house. Mike is the airport's second glider instructor, and he learned his skills at Post Mills from Babs. A New Hampshire lad early smitten by both power and soaring aviation, he attended Daniel Webster College, which is an aeronautical school in Nashua, and was taken on directly afterward at Post Mills, where he also performs such chores as tractor-towing the landed gliders to the end of the runway for the next flight.

Above us, the glider has parted company with the L-19 and is sailing to the west, seeking what Mike guesses is a weak thermal. The L-19 has peeled off and is making its approach to the runway. It dips precipitously, releases the yellow rope, which snakes to the ground, and flares out for a smooth touchdown. "He's done *that* maneuver a few times for his years," David says approvingly.

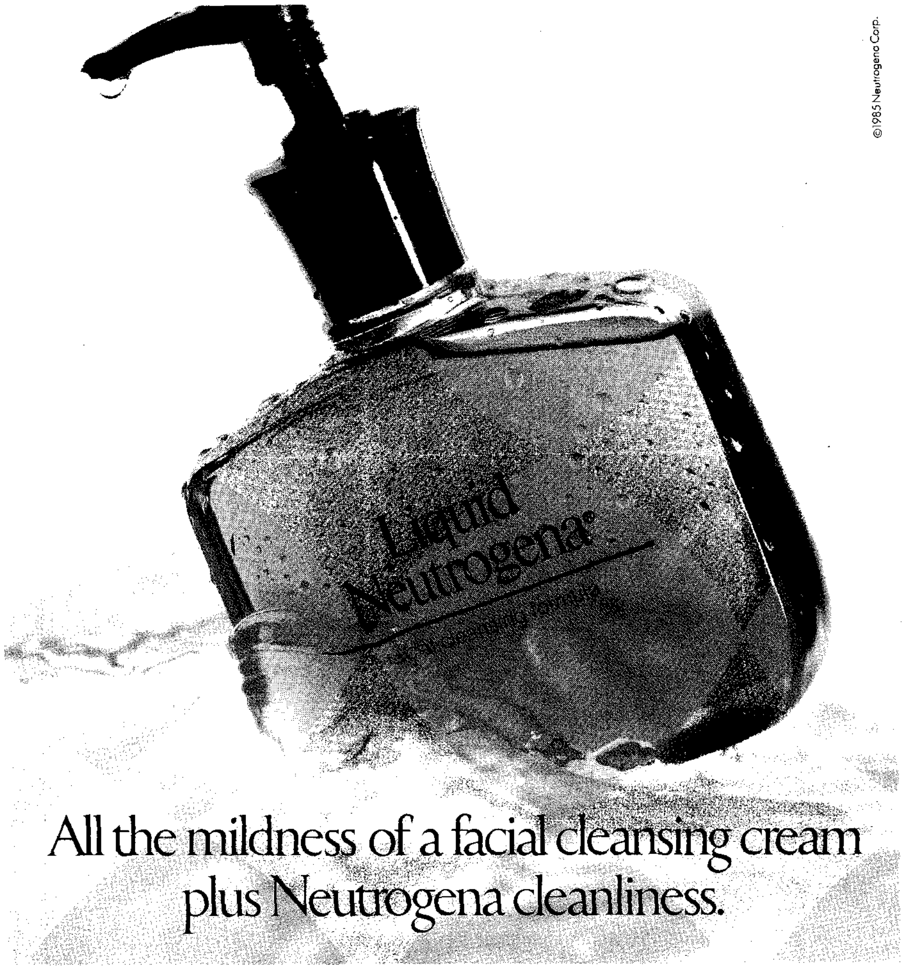
After parking the L-19, Phil Gerding joins us on the grass strip. As far as David Nutt is concerned, Phil is the wunderkind of contemporary aviation. He is only twenty-one years old now, and he started flying when he was eighteen, at Schenectady County Airport, near his home, in upstate New York. "I just went for it and did it," Phil explains. "I've had my flight instructor's rating since last year. I actually accomplished the whole thing in two years—doing a lot of restaurant work to pay for it all. My family has a camp over at Enfield, New Hampshire, so I did my summer flying at Post Mills. I really like it here—especially since they hired me. Now I'm working on my commercial glider rating, which means I can take passengers for hire—on sightseeing rides and things like that."

David says, "Fall-foliage viewing by glider is a major attraction in these parts. It's the only way to see the foliage, according to some people—no noise, no pollution. On certain days in the fall, we have a line of people waiting down here to go up. It's almost a big-time commercial operation." He laughs. "Phil will probably earn his glider instructor's rating, too, before the summer's over, and then we'll have three glider instructors at Post Mills. We want everybody to be able to do everything."

Babs' Schweizer loses its weak thermal and sinks slowly toward the field, entering the landing pattern. Before long, it whooshes down onto the runway—alarmingly fast, it seems to me. "Gliders go about their fastest when they're landing," Mike explains. It brakes sharply and stops dead halfway down the runway, its right wing alop like a wounded albatross. Mike jumps on the orange tractor and roars off to retrieve the glider for the next flight, and Phil returns to his L-19 tow plane. While the tow-takeoff procedure is repeated for another flight test, David offers to show us around the rest of the airfield.

Besides the two-place Schweizer glider and the L-19, the Post Mills fleet consists of a Cessna 152 and a Cessna 172, for sightseeing rides, charters, and flight instruction; a single-seat Schweizer, for solo soaring; a Bellanca Citabria ("airbatic" spelled backward), for aerobatic and tail-dragger instruction; and—the Nutts' pride and joy—a red-and-white 1976 Lake Buccaneer amphibian, which is housed, like a queen, in its own special place in the hangar, across the runaway. "Babs and I go on some long trips with this beauty," David says, caressing the sleek, boatlike fuselage. "Last winter, we went to San Diego and Baja California, sharing the flying fifty-fifty. It's a wonderful airplane, but it has some peculiarities. If you're a low-time Cessna driver, you better get a few dozen hours in it before you tackle this one, on land or water. Put the power to it and the nose goes down. If you bleed off power on a downwind leg, the nose tends to go up. You get only about a hundred knots cruising speed, because there's a lot of drag, and it's very, very noisy and doesn't have much room for luggage or extra passengers, but it's *my* favorite airplane, and Babs loves it, too. Once, we flew it to a formal dinner party at a friend's house on Lake Champlain. The trouble was there was no suitable mooring for an amphibian on the shore, so with everybody in their evening clothes watching from the lawn I stripped down from my evening clothes to my bathing trunks and guided the airplane in toward the beach and secured it. Babs stepped out, dressed to the nines, and then I changed back into my correct attire. It was quite an entrance."

After wandering past an odd assortment of tenant aircraft, including a Piper J-3 Cub, a Schweizer owned by a soaring club, some Eagle ultralights, and an ancient, outsize Cabin Waco in need of heavy restoration, we head back toward the picnic table, where we'll wait for Babs to finish up her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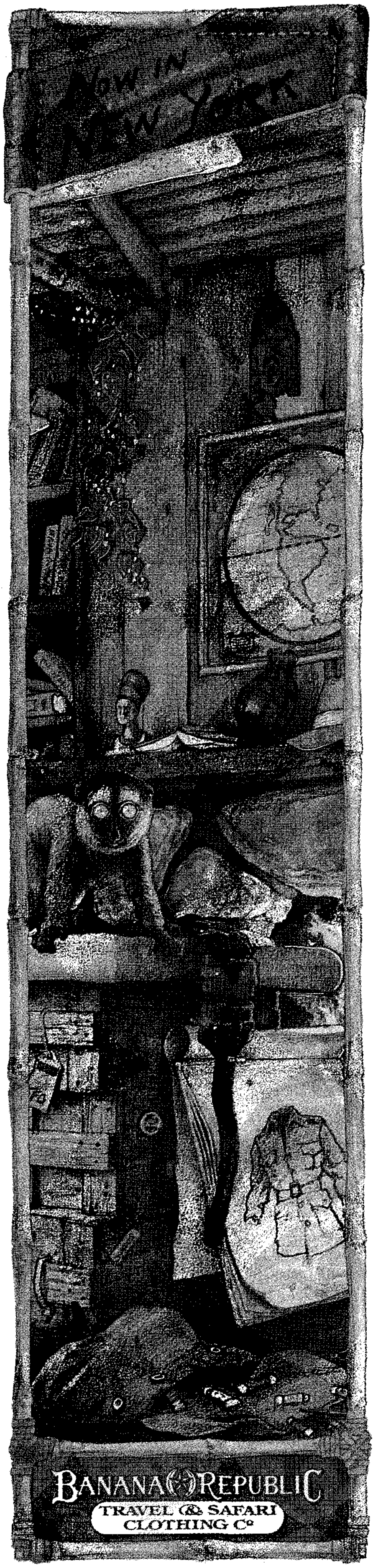

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flight tests and the attendant paperwork. In the meantime, we chat with a red-headed and red-bearded young man called Bob Farnham, also a member of the Post Mills coterie. From a hangar adjacent to the main house, he operates Green Mountain Aerolights—of recent days an exclusive northern New England dealership for the Falcon, which looks like a midget racing car sprouting wings. Bob takes us into the hangar to show off the Falcon, which, he tells us, is the Rolls-Royce of its species, with a fuselage made of graphite, Kevlar, and epoxy; a retractable nosewheel; a “canard” forward wing; and even an emergency-parachute system. “It's the only ultralight for New England flying,” he says, with a certain practiced salesmanship. “The Falcon is an extremely stable aircraft, and it has an enclosed cockpit with good instrumentation and controls and with cabin heat for cold-weather flying. I flew one during the winter back from Albuquerque, where they make them, and I never even had to wear gloves. It cruises at about sixty miles per hour, and it just costs about four dollars an hour to fly. This is the only ultralight I'm selling anymore.”

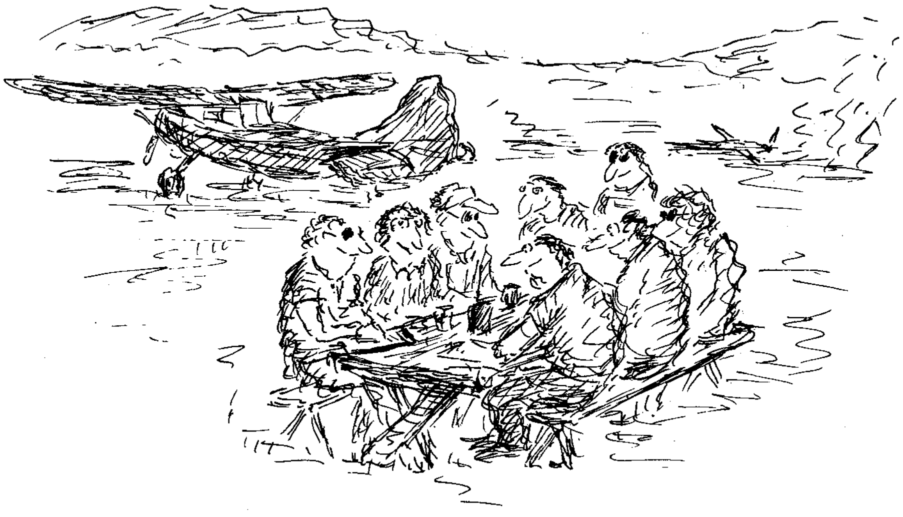
I ask him how he got into the ultralight business.

“Well, I came up here in 1975 to go to a small private school nearby, and I became involved with hang gliders,” Bob answers. “I thought they were pretty neat, but when I saw a picture in a *National Geographic* of this guy with two chain-saw motors attached to his hang glider I knew that the extended-flight possibilities were for me. So I took that picture to a friend in North Tunbridge who has a real nice machine shop, and together we figured out how to mount two McCulloch 10-10 chain-saw motors, with small propellers, onto my hang glider. We ran off hills with that thing and it was great, until I caught my leg in a prop one day and I realized I wasn't having as much fun as I thought I was. Just a big black-and-blue bruise—no major problem. Anyway, reading some aviation magazines, I saw that others were doing the same thing and calling them ‘ultralights.’ When I finished school, I went into ultralights commercially, sort of as a small-time venture capitalist. I sold the Eagle ultralights for three years, and now, as I say, I'm into the Falcons only. I can't hardly keep them in stock, they're so terrific. Here, sit yourself in that cockpit, and tell me how it feels.”

I squeeze into the Falcon's cockpit, and although I'm no ultralight fan I have to admit that it feels good—almost like sitting in a very small airplane.

“If you don't mind waiting a few weeks,” Bob says, “I can let you have one for ninety-six hundred dollars, fully assembled and ready to fly.”

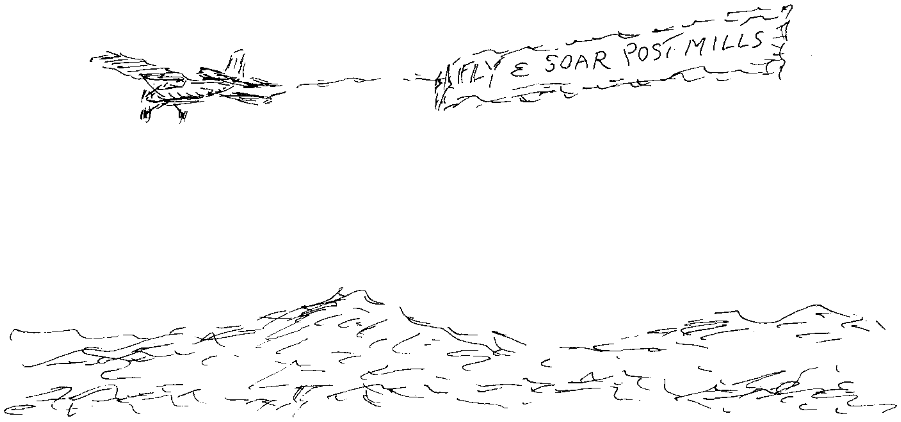
I tell him I'll think about it. Another potential customer pokes his head into the hangar, and Bob goes to work on him.



Ed and I notice that Babs has finally finished her flight-testing duties and is relaxing with a can of soda at the picnic table. We join her, and also her husband, Phil and Mike, the four visitors from Massachusetts, a couple of other people who have just wandered by, and an affectionate brindled airport cat. (As soon as Bob Farnham's potential customer has fully absorbed the Falcon spiel and departed, Bob joins the picnic-table group, too.) It is quickly apparent that Post Mills is not so much a small airfield as a setting for an extended family—a family headed by magnetic archetypal parents, Babs and David Nutt. The conversation, the thoughts, the emotions are all directed at them or routed through them—Babs, particularly. She is the earth-and-sky mother. Her trim, youthful figure, short, curly brown hair, winning smile, and open self-effacing demeanor belie her years. When I manage to monopolize her attention to ask some questions, conversation halts and every pair of eyes is on her.

I ask her about her flying.

"It came to me rather late in life," she says. "I was born Mary Louise Wright, in Englewood, New Jersey—no relation to the Wright Brothers, although I'm supposed to be very distantly related to Charles Lindbergh—and I grew up in Scarsdale, New York. I graduated from Mount Holyoke in 1941—now you can figure out how old I am—and married David in 1943. We came to Hanover permanently in 1946, and I had the full-time jobs of being a faculty wife and a mother. And they *are* full-time jobs. I raised six children in Hanover. Then, in 1966, when the last was in high school, I thought about learning to fly. I had always wanted to fly but I never did it, somehow. Of course, I had been up in airliners, but never in a light airplane. Seeing them overhead tantalized me. So one day I took a flight over the Hanover area with a friend, and I was hooked. It turned out that David wanted to fly, too."



David interjects, "Like Babs, I didn't have time to think about it seriously until after the kids were grown. I started a year or so after Babs. It's lucky we both liked the same thing."

"We began flying right here, at Post Mills," Babs continues. "Len Hoyt was still the owner of Post Mills back then—he comes by to visit from time to time—and a young fellow named Bob Burbank was doing all the instructing. He did a good job on us. I wasn't exactly a natural pilot—it took me about fourteen dual hours before I soloed in the Cherokee we were using then. Learning to fly out of this type of airport is more demanding, and it takes a little more time than average before you solo, but you learn how to fly well. I finally got my private license, in the Cherokee, and about a year later I discovered gliding."

"Around the time Babs discovered gliding, I was just getting *my* private license," David says. "By the way, ask Babs to tell you about her record-altitude glider flight."

"Oh, David," Babs says, reddening a bit. "Anyway, eleven of us who loved sailplanes started what we called the Pompanoosuc Soaring Club, named after the river near here. In 1967, we all chipped in to buy a sailplane and flew it out of Post Mills, with Bob Burbank doing the towing for us. And, of course, I was building up my ratings in power as well as soaring. I received some of my instruction for my private gliding license from John Schweizer, the son of the sailplane manufacturer, when he was a student at Dartmouth, and I got my commercial license in Big Flats, New York, at the Schweizer Soaring School. Now I'm a certified flight instructor in both power and soaring."

"And the only federal flight examiner for gliders in Vermont, don't forget," David adds. "My personal best is a private license, with instrument ratings, for sea and land airplanes. By the way, do you know that Babs is also an aerobatic pilot?"

I ask Babs about her aerobatics.

"Again, it was just something I was interested in," she answers. "I thought that any competent pilot should have some aerobatic experience, as a way of getting out of tight spots, and in 1974 I saw Jim Holland perform at an air show. He looked like a good teacher, so I took a course in aerobatics with him, using a Citabria. I found it the most exhilarating thing going. Sometimes I get a little sick, but . . ."

"That's why I was never involved in it," David says. "And I don't have the time to become proficient in it. Besides, I prefer to go someplace when I fly."

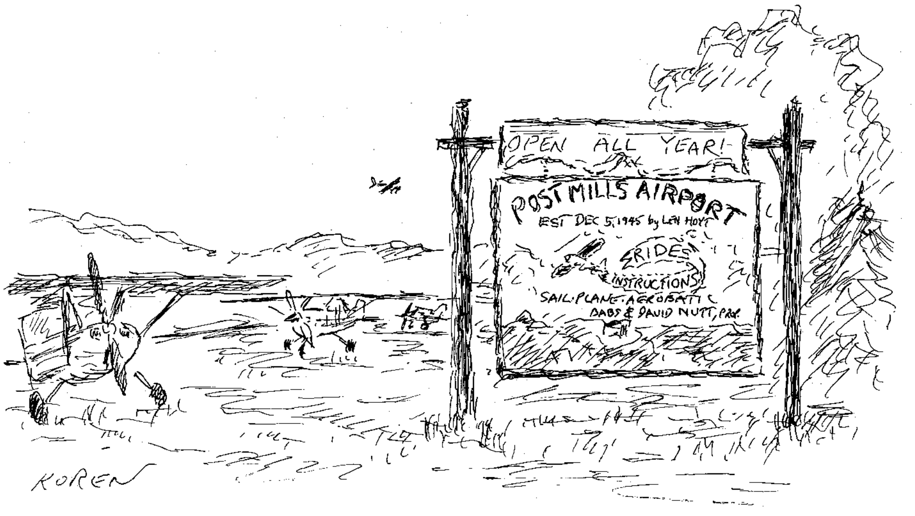
"My first aerobatic solo was upriver of here, over an unsettled area," Babs goes on. "I decided that I'd try a spin first. I must have cleared the area for fifteen minutes before I felt that the airspace was free enough of traffic to do a spin. Of course, I had done spins before, with an instructor—hanging on to my seat screaming with half pleasure, half surprise—but then you have confidence in your instructor's skill. But all alone—that was really something else! Well, I did my solo spins successfully, so I went on to the loop. The loop, I love it. That's flying, any day. You do only inside loops in the Citabria; it's not sophisticated enough for an outside loop. But I've flown Cuban Eights, snap rolls, aileron rolls, barrel rolls, and hammerheads in that airplane. You've got to keep up your practice in aerobatics or you lose the touch. To tell you the truth, I haven't done any serious aerobatics in the last two years, and I'm leaving the teaching of it to the younger pilots. You can't dabble in it—either you do it right or not at all. It's really for the young, I guess."

Speaking of the young, I ask what the Nutts' six children think of their parents' perilous pleasure and business. Were they infected with the flying bug, too? Babs smiles. "They think we're nuts—to repeat an old family pun," she says. "All in all, I believe they were glad to have us out of the house so much. 'Thank goodness the old witch is busy,' they probably said. All six of them became occupied with their own things, none of which involve aviation—kayaking on an international-competition level, sailing, raising families all over the place. They just never found that special something in flying that David and I found. They're indifferent to it, which is all right with us."

The picnic-table gathering thins out somewhat. The quartet of aviators from Massachusetts announces its imminent departure in the Cherokee, the three candidates for glider ratings having passed Babs' examinations with flying colors, and Bob Farnham leaves to demonstrate his Falcon ultralight to yet another potential customer. The rest of us watch the fully loaded Cherokee taxi to the end of Runway 05. It grinds halfway down the strip in a normal takeoff run, and then the pilot realizes that he's not going to lift off the turf in the hot, muggy afternoon air. He aborts the takeoff, slowing for a nick-of-time turn short of a ditch, a road, and some neighbors' houses at the end of the runway. We are transfixed by the sight, and then we all exhale very audibly. That same intense and palpable concern is felt for every takeoff and landing at every small airport I've ever visited. Again, the Cherokee taxis to the end of 05. We all hold our breath. This time, with more initial up-elevator and flaps, the airplane rises quickly off the ground; gathers airspeed; climbs easily over the ditch, road, and houses; and turns toward Massachusetts. Once more, a collective "*Whew!*"

No sooner has the noise of the Cherokee's engine faded than the grating lawnmower sputter of the Falcon disturbs the peace as Bob Farnham guns his demonstration ultralight down the runway. "They're noisy little beasts, aren't they?" Babs says.

"Well, they do exist," David says. "They're a definite part of recreational flying today, and they belong on a small field like this one. You got to roll with the times, I think. If there are too many around here, though, they'll have to find their own farmer field somewhere else or the neighbors will complain."



Do the neighbors complain a lot? Ed asks. Especially the ones down at the end of Runway 05?

"So far, no airplane has ever run into that white house at the end of Zero-five," Babs answers, "although just now I had my fingers crossed."

David adds, "The man who used to live there said he loved to sit on his porch and watch the airplanes fly over him. All in all, there are five immediate neighbors, and occasionally one of them comes over and complains that he didn't move up here to live next to an airfield. I tell him that the airfield was here before you were."

Babs points toward the cemetery, adjacent to the west edge of the airport. "Our neighbors on that side are very quiet," she says. "No complaints from them."

"And none of them are ex-students, either," Phil Gerding chimes in.

"In general, though, the townspeople of Post Mills like our being here," Babs says. "They take a certain pride in having an airport in their town, even though not too many of them are customers. The local kids come by on their bikes to hang around, to watch and listen. Some of them save their pennies for lessons. A fourteen-year-old just started to fly gliders. The town crew helps us plow out when the big snowdrifts pile up. It's really tough here in the winter to make a go of it economically, what with the cold, the snow, the fog, the short days, and the cancellations. Once, we thought we'd put the Citabria on skis and rent the airplane out to pilots who'd fly off to the boonies—landing on frozen snow-covered lakes and such—but then we decided maybe it wasn't such a good idea."

"Last winter, we closed down, and the staff went off to Colorado to ski," David says. "We don't know our plans yet for this winter." He goes on to spell out the fiscal problems of owning and operating a small airport. "Flying is a hobby, but running an airport is no hobby," he says. "The whole general-aviation business is slow nowadays. If you're running an operation down in Florida or Arizona, maybe you have a chance to make money on just instruction, charters, repairs, and rentals, but up here we have to drum up business wherever we can find it—a little revenue from this and that—to make a living. For instance, we do those sightseeing and foliage-viewing flights in both power and gliders, and we do short daytime charters, photography flights, forest-fire patrols for the state, other forest patrols for lumber companies looking for spreading disease and defoliation, some search-and-rescue work—we've even been hired to look for lost cows and dogs. Then, there are our paying tenants—Bob Farnham, with his Green Mountain Aerolights shop, and a combination hangar-and-house we rent to a mechanic named Skip Kemner—and various tie-down and hangar rentals. We sell maps, manuals, and logbooks in the office, and gasoline out here. We even let parascenders use the field—they're parachutelike gliders towed behind a truck. No skydiving, though. Two years ago, we were the hosts for the New England Region I Soaring Contest, and there were thirty-five gliders on the field and people camping out all over the place. Let's see, what have I left out? Oh, yes, the banner towing. We make up banners in big red letters for advertising, fairs, birthday greetings, and Phil tows the banner with the Citabria. Yesterday, he flew a banner over Hanover, after the rain stopped. They had a street festival there."

"And as of today we have a whole new thing going—a banner-towing student," Phil announces. "In fact, here she is." A comely young woman in purple jeans and blouse, sandals, and a backward baseball cap joins the picnic-table group. She is Jennifer Kaufman, a candidate for a commercial pilot's license. Everyone is quite taken with her—especially Phil, who will be her instructor. "My parents have a summer place in Woodstock and a regular house on Long Island, but lately I've been living in Southern California," she tells us. "There's a lot of banner-towing work out there, and on Long Island, too, so I thought I'd learn how to do it. Basically, I'm an artist—weaving, tapestry, and millinery design. I hope to make my career in both art and flying."

We wish her well in her chosen endeavors, and Phil, all smiles, leads her off to her first lesson in banner towing.

"That's a new one on me," Babs says, shaking her head. "You never know what's coming next in this business. When we bought Post Mills in 1978, we simply wanted it to remain a small airport, with no great vision of a major operation—something for fun and not to lose too much money. Now it's a labor of love—especially the instruction part. I love teaching, and, I guess, I love teaching gliding most of all. Gliding is my favorite part of aviation—more so now than aerobatics. It's more challenging, since you're dealing with the forces of nature every second. You *use* nature. Each flight is different, different in every place. You never learn all there is to learn."

I figure that this is a good time to bring up Babs' sailplane altitude record. She rather reluctantly agrees to talk about it, and she takes me inside to her office, where the record certificate hangs on the wall. She is at once diffident and proud. "Well, there it is, the piece of paper that proves it," she says, pointing at the framed document, and then elaborates on the official wording: "It was on the fifth of March in 1975, over Black Forest, near Colorado Springs. The opportunity came to try for the female two-place altitude record for a sailplane, in a Schweizer 2-32 all-metal ship. Hannah F. Duncan, of Colorado Springs, was the co-pilot. We released from our tow at about nine thousand feet above mean sea level—Black Forest itself is about seven thousand feet above sea level—and we flew for four and a half hours, to the record height of thirty-five thousand four hundred and sixty-three feet above sea level. We also won, coincidentally, the female two-place gain-of-altitude record for a sailplane. Luckily, we were in the right place at the right time with the right equipment: oxygen tanks, cold-weather clothing, a sealed barograph to prove our altitude. We flew as gliders usually fly in Colorado—by the mountain-wave effect; that is, by the rising wind on the lee side of huge mountains, not by temperature updrafts from thermals. Actually, you can do that somewhat in Vermont, too. My record for local mountain-wave soaring is twelve thousand feet. But that day in March over Colorado was perfect. Very clear. We just touched a thin cloud layer at the top. No jet traffic. But at that altitude it's a very hostile environment. Stall speed and airspeed are very close together. You balance on a pinpoint, and you have only fifteen seconds of useful consciousness if the oxygen fails. It's about sixty degrees below zero, Fahrenheit, up there. Hannah had electrically heated boots; I wore heavy socks and boots. . . . That weird wind noise. That odd light—the startling clarity of light. You are always aware of how small everything is below, how high you are, how beautiful it all is. . . . I'd like to do more mountain-wave soaring, but not in search of records. Getting too old, maybe." She looks out the office window at the still sky.

I tell her that I have never done any gliding, and that after listening to her talk about the sport I'm eager to try my hand at it. Would she give me a lesson, perhaps tomorrow?

"Well, technically, tomorrow—Monday—is our day off around here," she says, "but I'll be here at ten in the morning if you will. Phil won't mind flying the tow plane for us. He'd rather fly than eat." We agree to meet at the field at ten.

I have dinner nearby with Ed and his wife, and the dinner-table talk is about gliding. In this case, Ed is the nearest expert; a few years before, he took two glider flights at another Vermont airport. He tells me that being in a glider is like imitating a hawk—that it is an otherworldly, unlikely experience. This thought fills my dreams that night.

MONDAY, JULY 9, 1984. At precisely ten o'clock, I am at Post Mills, and so are Babs and Phil. Although it is their usual day of rest, they seem as keen to fly as I am. A gentle breeze from the south plays with the maple leaves, and some cottony cumulus clouds parade by. Babs says that the "cumes" with dark bottoms might signal pretty good thermals, although the ground is still damp from all the rain during the previous week, and the dampness tends to cool the air and slow its rising. "You never really know until you try," she tells me. "In fact, in soaring, the more you fly the less you seem to know."

During the preflight ritual around the two-seat sailplane—N17967 by name—Babs is pleasantly all business. This is a Schweizer 2-33A, she says, the most common training sailplane in the United States. The Schweizers are built in Elmira, New York. "It's a very forgiving, sturdy bird, although its performance is not terribly high—a twenty-two-to-one glide ratio," she goes on. "My record flight in Colorado was in a Schweizer 2-32, which is bigger and all metal, with a glide

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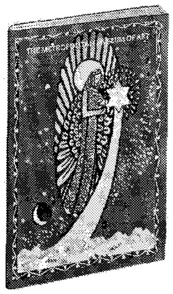

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ratio of around thirty-two to one—of course that means you can glide thirty-two feet for every foot of altitude." Our 2-33A has a nose molded of fibre glass and the rest of it is made of metal and fabric. Like most sailplanes, it has spoilers on the wings—hinged sections that pop up on command to increase drag and thus allow the glider to land at a steep angle, in a kind of controlled crash. The instrument panel and the controls are spare: an aneroid altimeter; an airspeed indicator; a variometer, for measuring the rate of climb or descent relative to the horizon; a tow-release knob; a vertical-trim lever; a spoiler-control lever; an air vent; a latch for the Plexiglas canopy; a rudimentary yaw indicator; and rudder pedals and a control stick. That's all. No compass, no avionics, and, naturally, no engine instruments—which makes the aircraft seem ridiculously simple.

But the simplicity is deceptive, as I discover when Babs explains how the thing gets off the ground. I am sitting, harnessed and belted, in the front seat, and she tells me from her rear seat about raising the drooping right wing off the turf once we begin to roll, when to apply back pressure on the stick, and how to follow in formation, as it were, with the tow plane. It's a lot to think about on an initial flight, so Babs says that she'll take off and then give me the controls at two hundred feet—the critical altitude for an emergency landing if something should go wrong with the tow. "We take good care of our towropes," she adds, "so we've never had any trouble."

With the canopy shut tight, we bake in the hot sun. The tow plane's engine is just a distant whirr. Babs wiggles the rudder—the signal to go—and the L-19, with Phil's blond mane clearly visible in the cockpit, takes up the towrope slack and moves down Runway 23. There is a tug, then the hiss of the single wheel rolling on wet grass, and we are airborne with amazing rapidity—well before the tow plane. At last, the L-19 climbs out, and, with its obedient burden strung behind it, rises over the hills to the south. It is weird and thrilling.

At two hundred feet, Babs says, "This is one of the harder things a student has to learn—following the tow plane in formation. You take the controls and try to hold the tow plane even with the horizon, as you see it." I take the stick with my right hand (I have nothing to do with my left hand, since there's no throttle), rest the soles of my shoes on the rudder pedals, and proceed to make a mess of things. Maintaining the correct position—mimicking the tow plane's every movement, and holding the proper attitude—is like trying to catch a cricket in tall grass.

"Forward pressure," Babs instructs calmly. "Now back. . . . No, forward again. . . . More left rudder. . . . More yet. . . . Now level out. . . . Right about there. . . . Keep your wings level. . . . Oh-oh, you're sinking. . . . Keep the tow plane on your horizon. If you drop too low, you'll be in his wake and we'll get some buffeting. . . . See? We're buffeting." I realize that I'm overcontrolling, compensating with a heavy hand for my sins, as I did in my early student-pilot days, but this is a whole new ballgame, even more difficult and ticklish. "Make those control movements slight," my instructor warns. Too late. We skid and slip badly. She takes over the stick and rudder pedals, and the glider magically follows the L-19 in perfect satellite formation. "It's sort of a dirty trick giving you the controls on tow the first time out, but you're a licensed pilot and you should pick up the feel quickly," Babs says. She hands the controls back to me, renewing my shaken confidence, and I find I'm doing a little better.

Out of the Post Mills traffic pattern at seventeen hundred feet, we climb more steeply—six hundred feet per minute, according to the variometer. For the next five minutes, I feel that I'm getting a better sense of coördination. "We're coming up to forty-seven hundred, so we're going to pop off the towline," Babs says. "This will make a sharp noise when the line releases. Pull the knob when I tell you to. Phil will break left and we'll break right. Keep your eye on him. O.K., pull the knob."

Pow! A party-popper firecracker. The yellow rope snakes toward the accelerating, left-diving tow plane; we turn right, and we're suddenly free, powerlessly alone in the sky—a stupendous sensation, slow and loose and ethereal. The only sound is the soft whoosh of the slipstream, like gentle surf on a sandy beach. We are over the Connecticut River Valley, north of Hanover. The Dartmouth campus spreads below, complementing the green hills. Babs trims for level flight and heads toward some cumulus clouds to the west. "We might pick up some rising wind over that ridge," she says. "O.K., it's all yours. Hold it at around forty-five miles per hour for the most efficient airspeed. I suggest a coördinated left turn. Use plenty of rudder to compensate for the yaw."

It's tricky, attempting to turn cleanly and not lose airspeed without the help of an engine and propeller, but it's great fun. I hear myself muttering gleeful monosyllables. Before we can pick up more altitude, we fall into what Babs calls a sink. I balance off the descent with back pressure on the stick, but not so much as to lose airspeed and cause a stall. Babs uses the occasion to describe glider stalls. "This glider stalls very gently," she says. "Just bring the nose up until you feel a slight bubbling and then lower the nose to recover. Try it."

I do as she has instructed, and there is a heart-stirring dip, like a silent amusement-park ride. The penalty for this instructive amusement, however, is that we have lost a hundred feet of essential height.

"Let's look for a thermal to get back some altitude," Babs says. "That darkish cume over there is a good possibility. If we go a little faster, we'll trade off altitude but cover more ground to get out of this sink and catch that potential thermal. It's a chance you take, trading off one thing for another."

In the crap game of thermal soaring, we lose this particular shoot. The desired thermal under the dark cumulus is nonexistent, probably because of the wet ground. But just ahead is a newly mown hayfield, and once we're over it the variometer shows that we are rising at two hundred feet per minute. I can detect the ascent only by watching the instruments; Babs can feel it in her seat. We tightly circle the hayfield—two adults and a substantial machine continuing to rise by sheer force of nature yet against intuitive natural law. It is extraordinary, unbelievable even as we accomplish it—not at all a human feeling. The thought occurs to me that we are not so much *imitating* a hawk, we are *being* a hawk. From the ground we resemble a giant, stiff bird of prey, but up here we actually are one. Babs tells me that some glider pilots claim to have become friends and fellow-travellers with hawks, the birds inviting the pilots to join them in the more productive thermals—sort of like dolphins befriending and helping scuba divers. There is something mystical about all this—almost as if I had departed from my human body and sprouted wings.

But, alas, hawks can flap their

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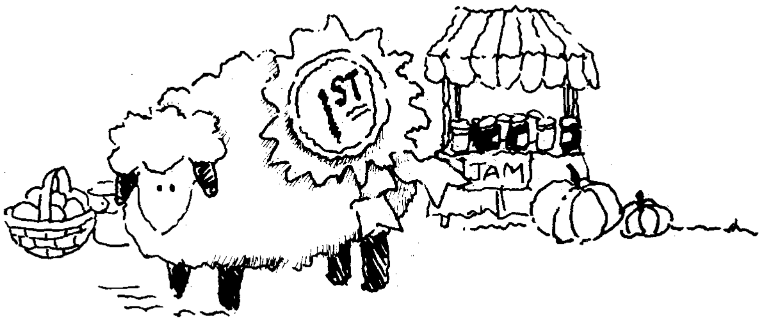

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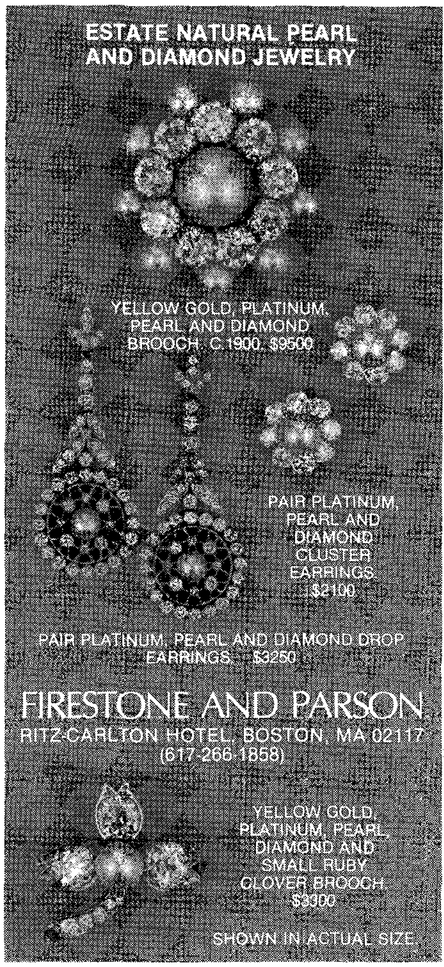
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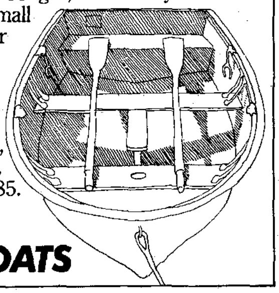


wings and continue to fly when they run out of rising air; glider pilots must think about landing at the home airport. The hayfield thermal dissipates, and we sink. We have enough altitude to enter the Post Mills pattern at seventeen hundred feet and set up a safe final approach to Runway 23. Babs reminds me that, contrary to the procedure for power landings, we must increase our speed to about sixty miles per hour and drive the sailplane onto the ground, using the spoilers to brake. I follow her coaching, descending to the turf at what seems to me a blistering pace. I flare slightly, apply full spoilers, and touch down with a comfortable jolt.

"Did I do that all by myself?" I ask.

Babs says yes.

I am proud and excited beyond measure.

While we retrieve the glider with the tractor and tie it down on its assigned spot alongside the runway, I pepper Babs with a dozen breathless questions. She is indulgent, knowing full well that I'm hooked on gliding. Most of my questions are about extending the duration of soaring. How does one know where to go for the best thermals—assuming that hawks don't point the way—and how long can one expect to stay up?

"Well, those cumes seemed likely, but they didn't pan out today," she says. "On some days, we could hop from one to another and stay up for hours. I figured on that hayfield as the best spot to gain some altitude. That field usually comes through. We call it our house special. But, as I say, you take your chances."

Still a hawk, still floating, I half-walk, half-soar to the picnic table with Babs. The Post Mills agora is empty. David Nutt is in Concord, New Hampshire, on business, and Mike Eberhardt is away on an errand. But before long a newcomer drops by. He is really an oldcomer—Len Hoyt, who founded Post Mills Airport, in 1945, and is now the seventy-two-year-old grandfather of the Post Mills extended family. Babs and Phil pay him due homage.

"Yep, I come by once in a while," Hoyt says, his hands seemingly sewn into his trouser pockets, and a bright-red patterned tam and horn-rimmed glasses accentuating his impishness. "Can't keep away from the old place. But I'm a kept man nowadays. Have a leaky valve, so I don't fly anymore. Go on whale-watching trips off the coast, to photograph the big blue whales. Babs and David are old sailors—they know about this."

I ask Hoyt about the pioneer days at Post Mills.

"Yep, well, I was mainly a mechanic back then, but I also used to fly small airplanes out of the White River Airport, which is now where the post office is," he says. "I saw this here field, and I said to myself that this is the spot for a farmer airport. After the war, I figured flying was the new million-dollar industry. I ran the airport for thirty-one years. It wasn't any million-dollar industry for me, but it was a lot of fun. I did sell Piper Cubs like crazy. A hundred dollars down and a note for twelve hundred more got you a Cub. Hell, that's what a landing gear costs today. We had what we called a doll house here at first, with two chairs, a stove, and a fifty-gallon drum of gasoline. Three instructors, at one time. Did a lot of ski operations. Had to break the snow loose from the skis with a pickax handle while the prop was turning, and then jump into the airplane. Even had an autogiro here. Noisy little bugger, like them ultralights. But things got too costly. I thought about retiring. Finally sold the place to a man who said he wanted a farmer field and didn't want to make a whole lot of money. I told him he came to the right place. That fellow ran it for a few years and went broke, so he sold the field to the Nutts, who fixed it up real nice, with gliders and everything. In my lifetime, I met a lot of nice people. Fliers are nice folks—well, I can think of a couple I didn't like so much. The young squirts here kind of upset me sometimes."

He motions toward Phil. "Haven't figured this one out yet. He's something else." Phil grins broadly.

"Yep," Hoyt goes on, "the last time I flew was in a Cherokee, but I don't think I'll do that again. Maybe, though, if I could just pass that physical . . ."

It's time for me to take to the road back to Connecticut. I dearly wish that I could be flying home. I say my thank-yous and goodbyes, but before I leave I purchase an official glider-pilot logbook from Babs. She endorses the first entry in the book, adding, under Remarks, "Familiarization, tow, turns, thermals." The terse, simple description of my introductory flight fills me with youthful intoxication over my brand-new toy, and I promise to return to little Post Mills to become a hawk again. —Burton Bernstein

THE CURRENT CINEMA

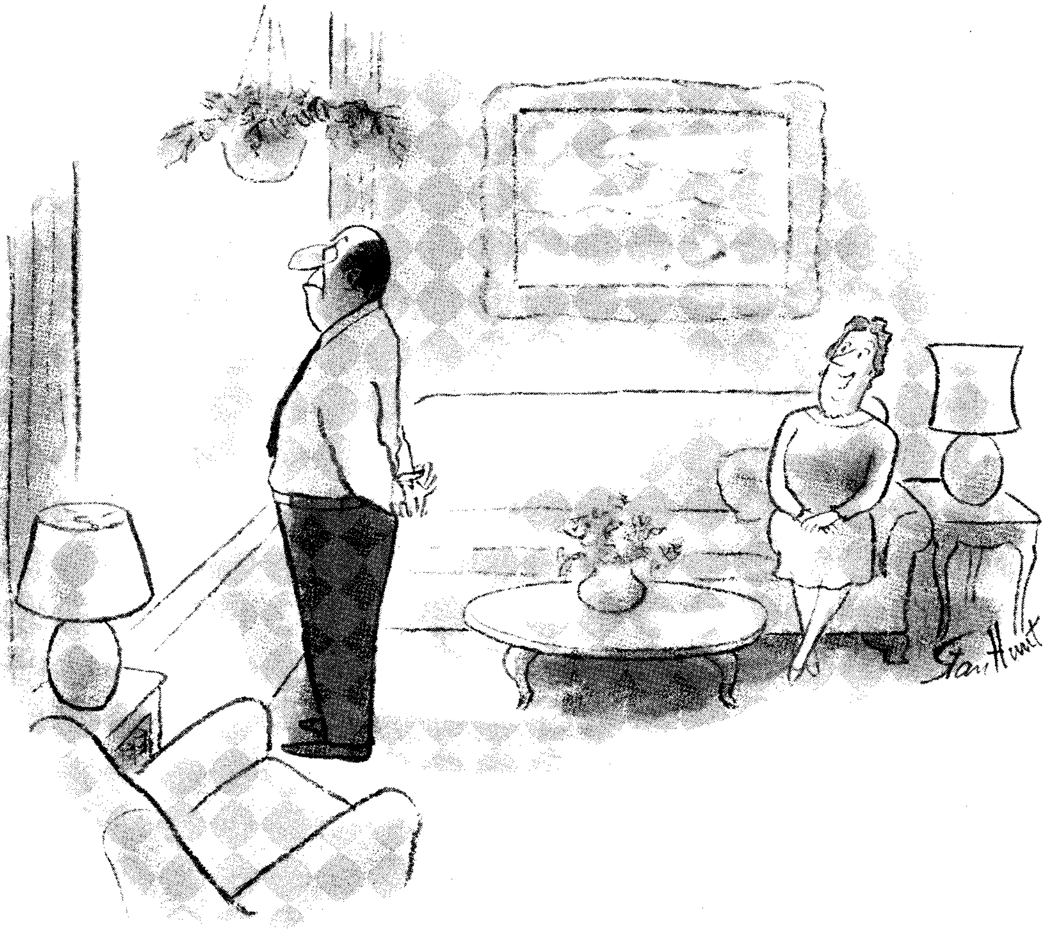
Tangled Webs

"KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN" is an ambitious yet slack piece of moviemaking, but, with its two heroes who share a prison cell in a nameless South American country—men who have nothing except each other—it can work on audiences in the way that "Midnight Cowboy" did back in 1969. And, the times having changed, it can make explicit what was potential in that earlier relationship. In schematic terms, the movie is about a homosexual and a revolutionary locked up together by a repressive society. Molina—"a silly old queen," he calls himself—is played by William Hurt; he is a window dresser in his late thirties who has been given an eight-year sentence for "corrupting a minor." Valentín, played by Raul Julia, is a pompous doctrinaire Marxist from an upper-middle-class background; he is being held for his political activities and has been tortured by the police, who want the names of his confederates. A puritan about pleasure, the radical Valentín treats Molina as a disgusting inferior, a degenerate. But Molina has beautiful, generous instincts: he shares his food with Valentín and nurses him when he's sick, tenderly cleaning him up when he's incontinent. Molina tries to comfort Valentín and help him forget his pain and misery by telling him the stories of old movies—one, in particular, he embellishes by evoking the luxury of the atmosphere and the elegance of the heroine's hairstyles, her gowns, her gestures. And Valentín, who at first is openly contemptuous of Molina's queenly affectations and his identification with movie goddesses, gradually comes to admit that he likes the storytelling, the movie lullabies.

The famous 1976 novel by Manuel Puig on which the film is based is more than a defense of escapism—it's an homage to escapism. The glory of the book is that the reader feels the power of fantasy. Puig, who grew up in a remote small town in Argentina, has said that in his childhood the movies were his only escape from drabness. In a recent interview in the *Times*, he explained, "It doesn't matter that the way of life shown by Hollywood was phony. It helped you hope." Yet Puig isn't a sentimentalist. Most of the novel is in the form of a dialogue between the two cellmates, so there is no authorial voice as such, and the motives behind what the men say are elusive. But there are undertones—subversive hints that the two men are using each other—which may or may not be picked up by a reader. They have definitely not been picked up by the movie, directed by Hector Babenco, from a screenplay by Leonard Schrader, with, reportedly, some assistance from Puig. The movie is essentially about two men who give to each other and learn from each other. (This is the first film that Babenco, the director of "Pixote," has made in English; the production is Brazilian, though, and it was shot in São Paulo.)

The story that the movie tells is of how the narrow-minded political martyr Valentín learns humility and becomes more of a man through his close friendship with the sweetly maternal Molina. And Molina, who says that he "takes it like a woman," and that he's incapable of falling in love with another homosexual—Molina, who dreams the impossible dream of being loved by a heterosexual man, has that dream fulfilled when the eminently heterosexual Valentín has sex with him, and even grants him his request for a kiss. The movie is primarily the story of Molina's transfiguration through the power of love and happiness and a new self-respect—that is, his shedding of his effeminate mannerisms.

William Hurt, whose performance took the first prize at Cannes this year, is just about the only thing to look at. As Molina, he has a henna rinse that gives his hair a peculiar, slightly rancid coloring, and he first appears wrapping a red towel around his head as a turban—a Scheherazade flourish—and wearing the thick, coquettish makeup of an aging vamp. Each time he picks up the plot threads of the Nazi-made spy romance that he nar-



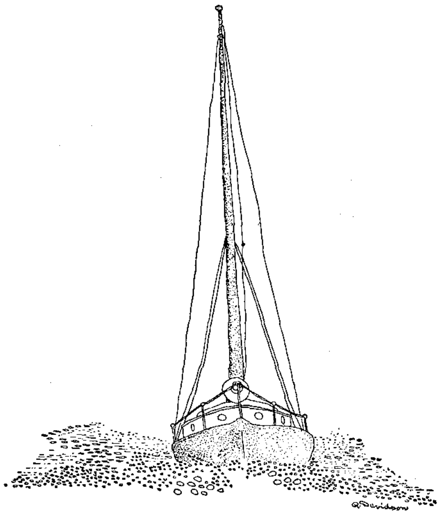
"Am I to interpret your silence, then, as acquiescence?"

rates, he inhales mightily before every line he delivers. It has been said that Hurt sometimes seems to move in slow motion. Here his voice goes into slow motion: he stretches out his words, lingering over them, and he springs each new detail for its maximum effect. His prancing mannerisms give the opening sequences some kick, and there's the promise of fun in the interpolated snippets of the film he's describing—"Her Real Glory," Puig's invented superproduction. Babenco stages it with the Brazilian actress Sonia Braga as dark-eyed, dark-haired Léni Lamaison, the "foremost diva of French song" and a woman of true nobility. Léni falls in love with a high-ranking blond, blue-eyed Nazi (played by Herson Capri), but doesn't allow herself to show it until after he opens her eyes to the vile schemes of the Jews in the Resistance; then she realizes that the Nazis aren't her enemies—they're saving mankind. The snippets are entertaining, but they're overdeliberate, studied.

Hurt's performance as Molina gives the movie its only liveliness, and liveliness doesn't come easy to William Hurt. He's very likable in the scenes where Molina reveals his tenderness and warmth and humor. But as an actor Hurt holds back; he has a knotted, bunched-up presence. Part of the acclaim for his work here must be because he's so wrong for the role that you're aware of what a showy feat his performance is. He gives the role an honorable shot, but he's miscast physically (he seems to be a North American who wandered into the South American setting—you don't know what that big cross is doing around his neck), and, worse, he's miscast spiritually. As a transsexual friend of mine put it, "Hurt as Molina is like having a basset hound playing a Chihuahua." Hurt doesn't fall into any of the obvious traps. He isn't condescending, and he handles Molina's adoring talk about his mother, and his saying that he has loved only two people—his mother and Valentín—in a straightforward, unembarrassed way. But Hurt's virtues are mainly negative, and his carefully constructed performance is all from the outside. There's nothing lyrical or iridescent about his Molina. Glamour doesn't hit a responsive chord in this guy's soul; his soul doesn't even vibrate sympathetically with the movie-goddess pictures on the wall of his cell. The role of Molina needs someone who can get lost in himself, in the bedazzled, imploding way that some homosexuals do when they talk about the movies they love. As Hurt plays the part (and as Babenco directs him), there's no humor in Molina's transformation when his feelings for Valentín deepen, and he stops using the epicene makeup and his face begins to shine with an inner glow and a purity that are worthy of Léni herself.

This is where the movie subtly departs from the novel: I don't believe that Puig saw any need for Molina to be redeemed. In the book, when Molina takes a self-sacrificing risk for the sake of his beloved's political ideals, and behaves like the valiant, noble movie heroines he identifies with, there's a strong possibility that Valentín, in giving him the kiss he asked for, has consciously manipulated him into risking his neck—has exploited his homosexuality. But the movie deeply—and deliberately, I think—sentimentalizes the novel, in order to make the material more touching, more urgent. From the way Babenco directs, his whole being seems to be charged with good intentions and the desire to be a firebrand. He pushes for a basic, "universal" meaning; he pushes for audiences to respond to Molina's humanity. The film's Molina is a wonderful person in every way—practical, earthy, and warm, and, finally, because of his contact with Valentín, selfless. This redemption drama is as phony as the forties screen romances that Molina is infatuated with.

That is to say, it moves an audience at the obvious points. Of course, it also holds your interest the way those forties movies did; you want to know how the picture is going to turn out. (There are a fair number of surprises, even if in discussing the film here I have to give away some of the plot.) But those are the only terms in which it works. Homosexual groups may think the film is politically correct, but its squareness is a betrayal of something in movie-loving gays: their carrying a personal theatre of romantic fantasy inside themselves. Molina is the moviegoer as *auteur*, and we should all feel as if some inner space had been opened in us when we see the clips of Léni's romance with her golden-haired Nazi, Werner (he's like an ersatz Conrad Veidt, with a suggestion of Helmut Berger). This glossy old movie in pseudo black-and-white—it's in desaturated, monochromatic color that looks faintly metallic—should make our heads spin. Some of the casting, such as that of Denise Dummont as the naïve, round-faced girl in the Resistance, has a witty accuracy, even if it recalls Hollywood films rather than Nazi films. And the footage adds a modernist flavor to the framing movie. But it doesn't do anything more—it never pulls you out of the framing movie and carries you away, though you keep expecting it to. It has no whirl, and Léni has no erotic undercurrents—just her brave, saccharine, masochistic surface. Léni's waxenness and lack of vivacity seem to go back to the novel. It may be that the playful, sly Puig was deliberately giving Molina a window dresser's version of old movies (Molina is very precise in his descriptions of fabrics), and that Babenco, putting the material on the screen, stayed with this skewed perspective. Léni is like a mannequin—a South American Joan Crawford on Quaaludes. And, partly because the movie clips are flat, Puig's celebration of the positive side of movie escapism—the way movies can become jewelled by imagination—doesn't really come across. There's hardly even a shift in tone between the clips and the rather garish prison squalor and the scenes from their pasts which Molina and Valentín remember. (Some of the memory scenes are staged like movie pastiches, but you can't tell why. An example: the one with the woman Valentín loves telling him, "If you leave, don't come back.")



The film is also marred by a hopelessly awkward sequence in which Molina, out of prison and trying to make contact with the members of Valentín's group, tells them on the phone that he'll be wearing a red scarf, and sets off to meet them. On the way to the meeting place, he sees that the police have him under surveillance, and we wait—and wait—for him to take off the red scarf. Inexplicably, he doesn't (perhaps his scarf is meant to be a flourish from the soul, like Cyrano's white plume), and the movie, making no sense, falls to tatters. It doesn't recover when the action returns to Valentín in prison, freshly bruised and tortured.

Raul Julia isn't broad and loud in this role, as he sometimes is on the stage; once Valentín stops being crudely contemptuous of Molina, Julia settles into an inoffensive, rather colorless, lightweight performance. (When in doubt, he stares straight ahead.) Valentín isn't the great role that Molina could be, but a little more might have been done with it if the sexual relationship between the two men had been ongoing (as it is in the book), and not just the one-night affair of the movie. Puig didn't have much affection for this Marxist prig, though, and the movie can't work up much of a charge for him, either. If he were really transformed, we'd feel that some dam in him had burst—that he was flooded with feeling. But in his physical embrace of Molina he's polite rather than passionate, and he never develops a real craving for the movie stories. And so Molina's legacy to him doesn't have the bittersweet ambiguity it should.

After Molina finishes telling the Nazi movie, he begins another story—this one about a shipwrecked man who lands on a tropical island, where a woman takes care of him (as Molina has been taking care of Valentín). This woman (also played by Braga) is caught in a spiderweb that grows out of her own body. Valentín visualizes her as the woman he still loves, but Molina, who always identifies with the heroine, thinks that he is this spider woman. And, of course, he is. Molina the entrancer, the spellbinder, has used his recollections of old movies to spin a web and draw Valentín into it. Valentín has drawn him into a web, too: they're both the spider woman. Alone, and suffering horribly from wounds inflicted by the police, Valentín at least knows the blessings of fantasy. Given morphine by an interne in the prison hospital, he's able to tell himself a movie story—he drifts back to the tropical island, where he's happy with the mysterious woman. Molina has restored him to his early dreams of a perfect love.

Somehow, this final tribute to the seductive, consoling power of movies doesn't click; its meaning doesn't register. I think this is because the picture has a conflicting impulse that's stronger. Babenco is reaching for something larger, something tragic and aggressively moral. The picture makes a show of its commitment to the highest human values. Puig's novel is saying that queens may be useless, silly window dressing, on the order of movie romances, but that can be lovely fun, can't it? It enhances life, makes it more rapturously giddy. Gay groups may consider this politically incorrect (right now, anyway), but it's what the book is about; Puig's plea for the indulgence of romance is much like that of Tennessee Williams, and the novel speaks to that part of us which wants more than is strictly essential—wants the delirium of excess. Babenco, in all his earnestness, is out to prove that silly old queens are useful, upstanding citizens, and he has steamrollered the romance and absurdity out of the material. His "Kiss of the Spider Woman" is a more exotic "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?" And it pours on pathos. The last words that the infinitely kind and good Molina hears before the police throw his body on a pile of garbage in an empty lot are "You f---ing fag." Old Hollywood never topped that.

A FEW months ago, an English critic, expressing the widespread English enthusiasm for "Dance with a Stranger," which features Miranda Richardson as Ruth Ellis, the last woman in England to be sent to the gallows, wrote that it "cuts like a comet across the winter sky." The comet must have fizzled out over the Atlantic. What it looks like here is an assaultingly cramped and monotonous movie about obsessive love. Fatalistic in a Q.E.D. sort of way, "Dance with a Stranger" might be described as kitchen-sink *film noir*. The audience I saw it with applauded heartily when Ruth finally put a few slugs in her weakling young lover (Rupert Everett), the upper-class amateur racing-car driver she can't live with and can't live without. He regularly gets drunk and slaps her around, but the applause—as far as I could judge—wasn't because the audience felt particularly antagonistic toward him. It was thank-God-somebody-made-a-decision applause.

Set in London in 1954 and 1955, "Dance with a Stranger" seems to be saying that Ruth Ellis was a victim of the class system—a tormented masochist who never had a chance at a decent life. When we first meet her,

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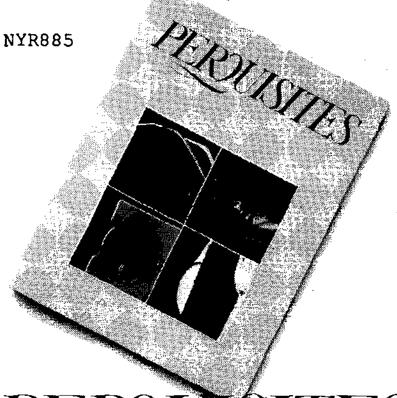

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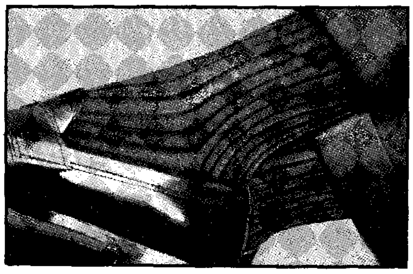

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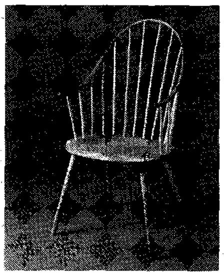

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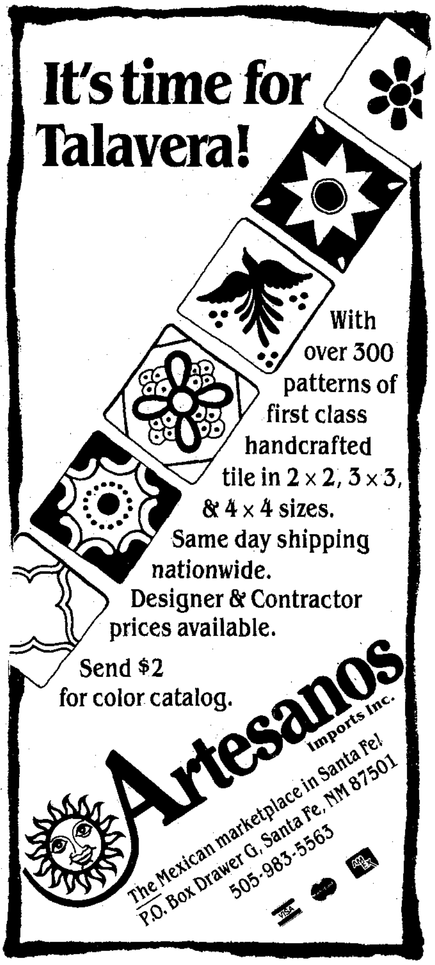
she's working as the hostess-manager of a tiny Mayfair private club; she lives (with her small son) on the floor above, and just above her is the brothel that's attached to the night club. We are given to understand that Ruth has graduated from prostitution but still takes care of a few customers—regulars—and accepts the devotion of a grubby businessman (played by Ian Holm in an odious little mustache) who's as obsessive about her as she is about her spoiled playboy. This is an "Of Human Bondage" triangle.

Working from a no-nonsense script by Shelagh Delaney, the director, Mike Newell, doesn't give you a minute's relief. He's obviously biting off a serious theme—he might be chewing on tinfoil. Ruth isn't allowed any charm or levity or hopefulness even at the start of her affair with the upper-class wastrel. Platinum blond, with cherry lips and mascaraed dead eyes under black brows, she has a tight, pale face, and her cosmetics are applied incredibly neatly—they look etched on. Ruth's manner is precise and quick and snippy, and her banter is sharp—it's on the bitter side. I guess we're supposed to find her independence sexually taunting; she's so hard-edged that you can certainly understand her drunken young lover's wanting to hit her. (Apparently, he's far from the first to beat up on her.)

Newell seems mortally afraid of light. He shoots in dim, smoky interiors, in a color range from olive drab to gray. The picture is all style—style used to pin the characters down in their environment, style used to show us the shabbiness of their lives and how everybody is trapped, doing what's inevitable. I think it's a hideously misconceived movie. When you combine kitchen-sink realism with all this *film noir* design, you get a deterministic view of people that closes them off from the audience. They're denied any responsibility for what they do, and there's nothing for us to respond to in them. All that's left is the film's hardboiled chic.

Miranda Richardson's much admired performance took a lot of technique, and you see it all. She points up everything she says, in an actressy way. When her lover says, "I shan't have any peace until we're married," she whips out, "I've *never* had any peace," and it has the tone of cosmic accusation. (We're supposed to accept it as self-knowledge and truth, and maybe see her as a Sylvia Plath, a Zelda, a sexual woman being driven



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mad.) Ruth's voice gets more and more shrill and screechy as the movie goes on; this awful sound is deliberate, of course, like her loud laugh, but it makes you cower in your seat, because it's all so obvious and overdone. Richardson acts as if every cell in her body were overstimulated; she can't stop acting, even when a viewer is begging her to, hoping for a glimpse of something besides all this white-knuckled control. In a few scenes, she's posed to recall Marilyn Monroe, but she has none of that wet-lipped, tarty looseness that suggests the appeal of the forbidden. In the one photograph I've seen of the actual Ruth Ellis, she has it, all right. It's easy to see what attracted men: she's a girl who's out for a good time. Her eyes may be a little blank, but she has a whory, libidinous smile, and there's a sparkle and a poignancy about her. This film is trying so hard for an unsentimental look at England's cold hypocrisy about class and sex that it leaves out the fun a good-time girl chases after. It's like a High Anglican "I Want to Live!"

—PAULINE KAEL

•

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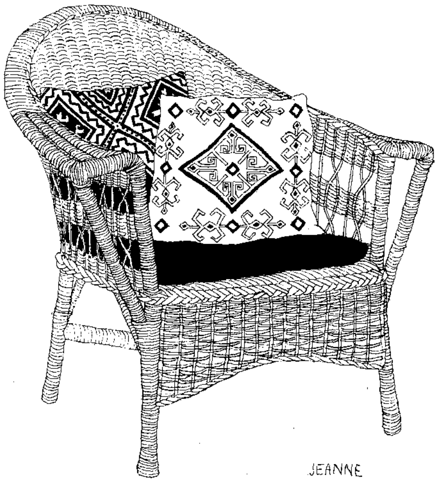
FEATHER RIVER COUNTRY

IN the fall, when I felt the first bracing shock of autumn air, I packed my fishing tackle and went up to Chester, on the North Fork of the Feather River, to do some trout fishing. The North Fork is not the most striking or unusual river in Northern California. The course it follows is typical of streams in the Sierra Nevada. Its headwaters are just southeast of Lassen Peak, and it winds some twenty miles downhill over granite boulders, through Douglas firs and a variety of pines, until it flattens out a bit and empties into Lake Almanor, a reservoir of twenty-eight thousand acres, in Chester. Bordering the lake are marshes, and in them, at most seasons of the year, you find ducks, geese, coots, herons, egrets, grebes, and many other aquatic birds. When these birds lose their feathers, the feathers float on the lake and also on the river, sometimes in such profusion that they are visible from the highway. Captain Luis Argüello, a Spanish explorer, was so impressed by the spectacle of feathers that, in 1817, he named the river in honor of it—El Río de las Plumas. The Feather shoots through a powerhouse at the southeast end of Almanor and continues through densely timbered, largely inaccessible terrain that conceals the rustic settlements of Seneca and Caribou. It rejoins civilization at Belden, which is really nothing more than a few cabins and trailers and a general store, and which can be reached by crossing a suspension bridge.

In the eighteen-fifties, Belden was a gold-mining center, and so was nearby Rich Bar. The gold was in the rock of the mountains and in placer deposits in the gravel of the streambed. Four miners from Georgia once took fifty thousand dollars' worth of gold out of Rich Bar in a single afternoon. Dame Shirley Clappe, a transcendentalist sympathizer who'd studied at Amherst Academy with a tutor of Emily Dickinson, moved to Rich Bar with her husband, the frail Dr. Fayette Clappe, and proceeded to chronicle its heyday in her letters. The Clappes had a rough journey to Rich Bar. Fayette suffered from fevers, and Dame Shirley fell off her mule. Her spirits improved when she saw the North Fork from the summit of a hill. It seemed to her like "half a dozen blue-bosomed lagoons, glittering and gleaming and sparkling in the sunlight as though each tiny wavelet were formed of rifted diamonds." The Feather at Rich Bar is not so grand anymore, but the stretch below the Belden bridge, at the confluence with Yellow Creek, is still impressive. Here the river is big and sweeping, dark green, awash with foam. It flows with such power that it suggests some force of retribution only momentarily held in check. The soaring walls of a canyon pinch it in. Every now and then, a freight train makes its way along a track that cuts like a seam through the canyon walls, and you can hear the distant, historical sound of a locomotive working on all its cylinders. There are several hydroelectric dams on the Lower Feather, so the river loses its thrust and grows calm and unthreatening. It rolls on through odd little communities like Pulga and Jarbo Gap, and becomes thin and trickly, and finally dies out in Lake Oroville, above Sacramento, on the fringe of the suburbs.

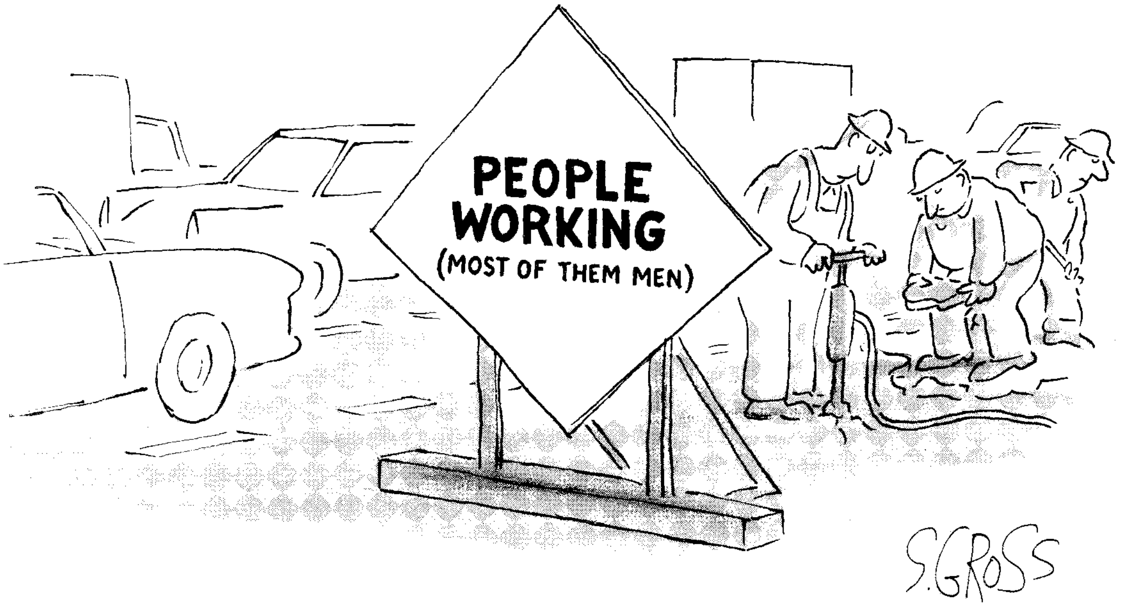
I drove through most of this country on the trip up from San Francisco, and arrived in Chester on a fine, warm evening. Chester is a lumber and cattle town of about two thousand people, situated at an elevation of forty-five hundred feet. Maple trees along the main drag had begun to change color, and flurries of yellow leaves were falling into yards with white picket fences. The town reminded me of New England—the picket fences, a white clapboard house, a church with a tall steeple. I stopped at a pharmacy and bought a map of the area, and also a copy of *Gold Prospector*, a magazine for amateur gold hounds who use pans and sluices and dredges to work rivers like the Feather and the Trinity for flakes and nuggets. I wanted to see Lake Almanor, so I drove on to the outskirts of town, where horses and cattle were grazing in an open field, accompanied by starlings and blackbirds. The marshes at the edge of Almanor were green and rust and brown. A mist was gathering on the lake, but I could still make out a flock of mallards policing up their supper. The green heads of the drakes looked iridescent when they came up out of the water.

I had hoped to rent a cabin in Chester, but I saw no signs for resorts, and I had to settle for a motel. In my room, I assembled my fly rod, preparing for an early start in the morning. I had dinner in the motel restaurant, where the cuisine was a celebration of red meat. Steak and prime rib were served in triumphant American portions, in a dining room decorated with woodblocks and tiki heads. It is almost axiomatic that the pants on the waitresses in such places will be too tight, and that a bowling trophy will be displayed somewhere, along with a photograph of the founder. After I'd eaten, I had a bourbon at the bar and asked the bartender if he'd heard anything about the fishing. Obviously, the question had been put to him before. He grunted, and said that he hadn't heard anything recently but that the fish were there. They were in Hamilton Branch, in Yellow Creek, out at High Bridge, in Butt Creek and Butt Lake, downriver in Caribou, and even right in Chester. In fact, the North Fork was many different streams, and each of them held trout—sometimes big trout—for anglers good enough to catch them.



THE first spot I fished was Yellow Creek. I was actually heading for Caribou, where the fly-fishing was supposed to be particularly good, but I missed the turnoff and wound up parked at a rest area across from the Belden general store. The creek was nearby, tumbling out of a forest of mixed conifers. A trail ran alongside it, so I put on my waders and hiked in for half a mile, looking as I walked. Steller's jays, with their fierce crested heads and argumentative squawking, sailed about overhead, settling on the limb of pines and knocking down pinecones. Gray squirrels were also around, and they were acting like the squirrels in storybooks, stuffing themselves on acorns and other nuts in anticipation of winter.

There were lots of big rocks in Yellow Creek. Its flow was not smooth but was broken up into little pockets. In angling parlance, this is known, appropriately, as pocket water. One angling writer, Art Lee, has compared pocket water to an apartment complex for trout. The fish can live fin by tail in spaces as small as three hundred and twenty-four square inches—a foot and a half by a foot and a half—if the spaces are from eight to twelve inches deep. The main problem in fishing water like this is that wading can be difficult. The rocks underfoot are slippery, and the current is usually strong. But pocket water also offers significant advantages to anglers. Insects bounce by the pockets very quickly, so trout can't waste much time on inspection. In slack water, they can examine bugs at their leisure, and they're less likely to mistake an artificial fly for a natural.



From my fly box I chose a Humpy, medium-sized. The Humpy is a bushy brown dry fly that rides high on the water and can take a good deal of buffeting without losing its shape. Humpies are not necessarily meant to imitate any particular insect that might be hatching. Instead, they're intended to represent to trout a curious but inviting morsel of food; it's like drifting a filet mignon before creatures who've been eating hamburgers. I tied on my Humpy and waded into the creek. On my first few casts, I raised some fish, but I failed to catch them. They nipped at the fly and disappeared before I could set the hook. I waded on for ten yards, but I got no more rises. I stopped in some slanting shade and switched the spool on my reel. The new spool had a sinking rather than a floating line, and I used it to fish a caddis nymph—a fly that duplicates a caddis larva. Almost immediately, I caught and released a nine-inch rainbow trout. I fished for an hour longer, until the sun was almost directly overhead and the creek was translucent. When I climbed up the bank to the trail, I stepped into a cloud of ladybugs. There must have been a million of them. The sky was dotted with orange-red bodies.

That afternoon, when the sun was lower and there were shadows on the water, I backtracked to Caribou and found the right turnoff—a bumpy macadam road that took me past a deserted trailer park and then into mostly undomesticated country. From the road, the river looked deceptively shallow. If you'd never been fishing, you probably would have ignored it, on the assumption that it was fishless, but you would have been wrong. This was pocket water again, and the trout were in their apartments. The foothills by the stream were tangled with chaparral—greasewood, toyon, chamiso. Dame Shirley hated this stuff. She thought the knotted shrubbery stood like "vegetable skeletons along the dreary waste." Chaparral was "a plantation of antlers." I parked the car and scuttled downhill through a thicket of blackberries. I picked a few berries to munch on, but they were old and tasted powdery. Next to the thicket, there were some manzanita bushes, and I paused to admire them. They were small, with smooth, twisted reddish limbs. Manzanitas put out a fruiting cluster that looks like little apples—which is what "*manzanita*" means in Spanish. The fruit can be made into jelly. Manzanitas are at their aesthetic peak in winter, when the rains come. Moisture seems to seep into them, and they get slick and oily, resonant with color.

I put the spool with the floating line back on my reel and tied on a fresh Humpy. Because the river was shallow, the wading was easy. I fished around a bend and spooked a water ouzel from its perch on a boulder. The ouzel, or dipper, is truly an amazing bird. It's not much bigger than a wren, and it's built the same way, with its tail upturned at an angle. This bird walks on the bottom of streams to get its food. Never mind the rushing turbulence. Ouzels just saunter along, digging into the streambed with their claws and drawing a nictitating membrane over their eyes like a pair of goggles. I cast into the pocket behind the ouzel's boulder and watched a trout rise and take my fly. It was another rainbow, maybe twelve inches long, but quite fat through the middle—fat enough to make a meal. Trout stay fresher if you clean them right away, so I killed this one and gutted it. Inside, I found slabs of roe. It was a female, about to spawn. Once I had put her in a plastic bag and stuffed her into my vest, I continued my casting. There was a breeze now, and it scattered leaves from the blackberry bushes onto the water, where they made soft ripples and dimples, like feeding fish.

IN Rich Bar during the gold rush, the only two-story building in town was the Hotel Empire. Dame Shirley was not fond of it. She objected to the scarlet calico of the barroom ("that eternal crimson calico, which flushes the whole social life of the 'Golden State' with its everlasting red") and to the architecture of the place ("such a piece of carpentering as a child two years old, gifted with the strength of a man, would produce, if it wanted to play at making grown-up houses"). I had a similar opinion of my motel. I didn't want to go back to it, so on the return trip to Chester I scouted the shoreline of Lake Almanor for resorts, and discovered Plumas

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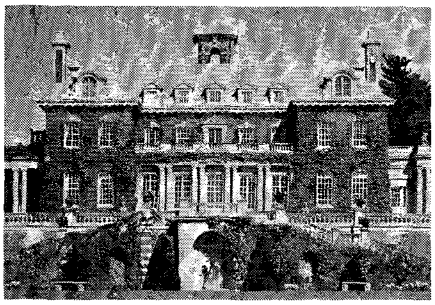

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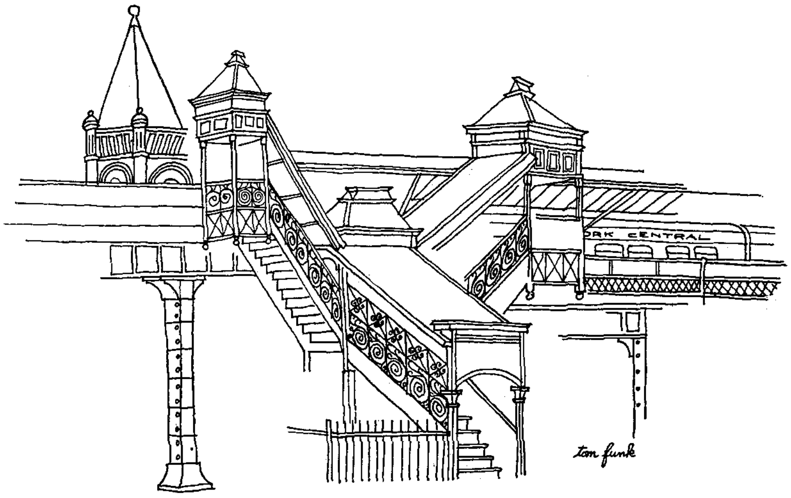
Pines. It had a store, a marina, and several compact, unadorned powder-blue cabins. The one I rented was set back from the road, under some fir trees. There were other cabins near it, but they were vacant. I had Plumas Pines to myself, and I liked the idea.

I carried my groceries into the cabin and stacked cans and boxes on shelves. Grape-Nuts here, cornmeal there. Onions and potatoes on a ledge above the sink. The fridge wasn't on, so I plugged it in and filled it with beer. I stored the cheese in the proper compartment. The cabin had a porch with a view of the lake, and I put my notebooks out there, and also the books and magazines I'd brought along. Had I ever visited such painstaking attention on my own home? But this was a cabin, by a lake, in the country. I took a cast-iron skillet from a cabinet, swept out the bug wings with my sleeve, and slapped in a pat of butter. I opened a beer and then washed the trout. The flesh was pinkish. I rubbed it with garlic and salt and pepper. I poured some milk into a saucer, rolled the fish in it, then rolled it in cornmeal. I fried it with the onions and ate it on the porch, and I drank another beer and read some chapters of a mystery novel. Then I went to sleep.

THE next day, I fished at Caribou again and caught some more small trout, including one brown. It occurred to me that I might be neglecting water that held bigger fish, so in the morning I went to Chester to consult with the locals. There are three tackle shops in town, and the first one I came to was Bob's Bait & Bull. Inside, Bob was behind the counter listening to some bull from two young ladies who had been out shooting pool the night before and claimed to have whipped everybody they'd played. The conversation didn't surprise me, because if you own a rural business you need people to sling the bull with—especially when summer's over and the tourists have gone home. Bob was a brawny, bearded guy who wore a baseball cap and a down vest. Virtually every Northern California mountain male of a certain age and outdoorsy temperament wears a baseball cap and a down vest. The Levi's go without saying.

"Good morning!" Bob bellowed, using all the lung power available to him. "Can I help you?" I selected some token Humpies from a display box of flies, and then I asked Bob—just as I'd asked the motel bartender and everybody else I'd met—if he'd heard anything about the fishing. Well, Bob had. Without hesitation, he recommended Butt Lake, a hydroelectric impoundment in Plumas National Forest, not far from my cabin. Out at Butt, minnows were dying off and floating to the surface, in a channel directly below the lake's powerhouse. Anglers were catching very large rainbows on minnowlike spinning lures and night crawlers. The trout went seven, eight, even ten pounds. The only thing that bothered me about the report was that I didn't want to fish with hardware or bait—I wanted to stick with flies. So Bob shrugged and sold me a fly that imitated a minnow. It had a white head and a silvery foil body dotted with black spots. Under the foil, wrapped around the shank of the hook, was some plastic foam to keep the fly afloat. I bought several of these flies, and also some Almanor Specials—nymphs that Bob touted for fishing the mouth of the North Fork, where it joined Lake Almanor, in Chester. "There's some good big browns in there," Bob said. "Just walk on in from East Fourth Street."

Why do flags and flagpoles look perfect in small towns but ridiculous in cities? Old Glory was waving in front of the Chester Post Office, flapping its stars and stripes. I followed East Fourth until it stopped, abruptly, at the river. Beyond the river was pastureland full of whiteface and Angus cattle. I started down a well-worn path through aspen trees. There was a serenity to the autumn landscape, a harmonious blending of yellows, golds, rusts, and reds. Autumn is an opportune time to fish for brown trout. They usually begin spawning in October, so they're likely to be on the move. Ordinarily, browns are wary feeders that stay close to home. They are much more difficult to fool than rainbow or brook trout. Some years ago, in an experiment on the Deschutes River, in Oregon, browns and rainbows were stocked in equal numbers. Four rainbows were caught for every brown. In a similar experiment in Maine, the ratio was five to one.



It took me about ten minutes to reach the river mouth. A slight haze of vapors was on the lake, and the boats out there had the delicacy of Impressionist boats on the Seine. In some marshes, I saw a flock of Canada geese—ungainly birds, terribly awkward on land, but Thoreau loved them when they formed a harrow and flew over his cottage. "Man pygmifies himself at sight of these inhabitants of the air," he wrote in his journal. Pygmification by tall buildings or jet planes is not the same as pygmification by the beating of wings. The geese in the marshes didn't fly off when I approached, but they honked like angry motorists and scared a bunch of frogs, which leaped into some mud on the shoreline, burying their heads in it. Whenever frogs perform their panicky jumping act, they make a little screeching noise that sounds like "Eeek!" You have to wonder what sort of fantasy they were involved in while they were sunbathing. Nature distracts all its creatures? Induces ruminative spells even in cold-blooded brains?

The North Fork ran smoothly here, without any pockets. I tied a new leader onto my sinking fly line. The leader was twelve feet long and very thin, the better to disguise the connection between fly and line. I waded into the river and cast upstream, so that the Almanor Special would sink and nudge along the bottom. That's where the browns would probably be, hiding from the sunshine. The trick in fishing nymphs is to know when you've had a bite. Since a dry fly is fished on top, you can usually see trout rising up to grab it, and you set your hook accordingly. But nymph action takes place in the invisible depths of a river. You have to imagine what's going on down there, using the few clues that are transmitted to you via your line. The best nymph anglers are said to be able to set their hooks by intuition, anticipating a fish's bite. They respond to messages that are lost on the rest of us. I got several taps that I thought might be trout, but when I set my hook nothing was there. I finally caught one rainbow, but it was another small one, and I quit fishing around noon and went to the Kopper Kettle for a late breakfast of eggs, home fries, and skull-busting coffee.

DUSK at Butt Lake. From a hillside parking lot, I could see bits of silver floating on the surface of some frothy water that was pouring out of a powerhouse. The water flowed through a concrete channel—it was like a spillway—that fed into the lake proper, where everything was still and glassy. The silver bits were minnows. Occasionally, there was a swirl in the midst of them, and a giant trout would briefly appear, flashing a huge dorsal fin. About forty anglers were crowded in on one side of the channel, standing on a jetty and casting at the swirls with minnowlike lures and hooks draped with night crawlers. They were flailing around with an energy that can be born only of monstrous desires. I felt the way poor Dr. Clappe must have felt when he arrived at Rich Bar to set up his practice and found that twenty-nine doctors had preceded him. I took up a position between two anglers and tried casting my plastic-foam fly, but I couldn't get it out far enough, and the channel was much too deep to wade. I had to stand there, handcuffed, and watch as a man farther down the line hooked a trout and brought it cautiously to land. It was a rainbow, and it weighed a good seven pounds. The man had not prevailed by skill or brainpower—he had been using a gob of worms. The world is mean when it comes to distributing justice.

On the other side of the jetty, Butt Creek flowed through a ravine. Nobody was fishing it, but I thought I'd give it a shot—maybe I'd be rewarded for asserting my independence. I used everything from nymphs to Humpies and never raised a fish. There was a sliver of moon above the firs when I got

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back to my car. Below me, in the channel, anglers were carrying on with their casting, night fishing being legal at the lake. As I was stripping off my waders, a retired fellow from Sacramento came over for a chat. He was one of those perfectly preserved specimens who pride themselves on never having surrendered to an excessive moment in all their lives. He told me he'd fished the creek that afternoon. He'd taken three rainbows, all sixteen inches long. He'd been using crickets for bait. He said that while he was fishing he'd seen another guy take a brown trout that went twenty-seven inches. The guy had also been using crickets, and he'd needed almost half an hour to land the brown, because he was wearing a revolver on his hip and he didn't want to wade into the creek and get it wet. I asked why this guy who caught the trophy brown on goddam crickets had had a revolver with him. "Snakes," the fellow from Sacramento said.

THE evening at Butt Lake had a bad effect on me. No longer was I happy with a simple day's fishing. What I wanted was a megatrout. Worse, I wanted it on my own terms. It made no difference to me that the only people catching the big ones were not fooling them but feeding them—I kept fishing flies, dry and wet, lost in a purist's syndrome. Once more, I went to Butt Creek—at dawn, this time—and in weather that was cold enough to put frost on my windshield I cast over pocket after pocket without causing the minutest stir.

After that, I began to explore. One morning, I fished some slow-moving water of the North Fork, at Virgilia, downriver from a couple of men who were panning for gold. The pans looked like pie plates, though thicker. When you're panning, you try to concentrate heavier materials while washing away successive layers of lighter stuff. You get rid of gravel and lumps of clay, and you wind up with mostly black sand and maybe traces of platinum, tin, and other minerals. If you're lucky, you find a few gold flakes or particles. These you pick out with a pair of tweezers. Sometimes the odd nugget turns up, and you make a little money. There are mountain towns where the equivalent of gold-swap meets are conducted—say, Downieville, where the plank sidewalks are often crowded with codgers and rednecks and goldbugs who want to sell off medicine vials in which their gold flakes and particles are suspended in the clearest water imaginable, turning and turning, like scales of goldfish.

Did I realize then that I was doing pretty much the same thing that the panners were doing? That a big brown was only slightly less rare than a worthwhile nugget? I did not. Skunked again, I drove to my cabin and passed the evening reading *Gold Prospector*. The editor called himself Buzzard. The first line of his editorial was "All that glitters isn't gold." There were advertisements for sluices, rock crushers, dredges, and a dry-vac backpack gold concentrator, the E-Z Pikins. A full-color centerfold featured photographs of gold pans dusted with gold. Woody Caldwell, whose column ("Ask Woody") fields questions from readers, discussed the various precious metals that had been used to build New Jerusalem, as they were described in Revelation 21:18-21: "The city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. . . ."

Again I was up at dawn, driving the back roads of Plumas County. I drove halfway around Lake Almanor and fished the Hamilton Branch of the Feather. It was like being in the infantry. As soon as I climbed over one rock, there was another one ahead of me. Between rocks there were clumps of ugly grass. There were many overhanging branches waiting to snag my line and foul a cast. I caught nothing on the Hamilton Branch, but it was not the low point of my trip. That came at High Bridge, outside Chester, the same afternoon. There I covered a mile of pockets—perfect pockets!—in three hours, but all I got was a pair of eight-inch hatchery rainbows.

While I was stretched out on the bank of the river, resting, a cricket crawled over my hand. It set off a chain reaction in my head that went something like this: cricket; fellow from Sacramento; three big trout. Without any further thinking, I tapped the cricket with a stone. He quit moving. In my vest I had some hooks, and I took one out and tied it to my leader. Then I put the cricket on the hook and let my line drift into the Feather. No trout went for the bait. The hook drifted along, apparently as unappetizing as a leaf or a twig. I waited about thirty minutes before I reeled in the line. I hoped that the cricket had fallen off, but it was still there, waterlogged and coming apart. The sight of it made me feel cruel and unenlightened. I didn't like to admit that I was capable of such purposeless gestures. In the city, it's easy to explain them away. The cabbie was a jerk. The child deserved to be slapped. The boss does it, too. But solitary expanses of country deprive you of your excuses. To be alone in nature is to be responsible in some ultimate sense.

The only thing that saved this day was the sunset. Is it possible to write about sunsets anymore? Probably not, although it may be necessary. Suffice it to say that this one was brilliant and rosy, with striking aftereffects—streaks of red, then a dull-lavender glow above the pines. Buoyed up on beauty, I paid a visit to Eidhammer's Chester Saloon and Dining Emporium, where a party was going on. It was Bruce Eidhammer's eighth anniversary as owner, and the drinks were on the house. In the general uproar, I talked for a while to an old rancher in overalls. He kept circling around a Yamaha electric piano that an entertainer was supposed to play later in the evening. The rancher couldn't figure out how the hell it worked. When the bartender asked him if he needed another beer, he said, "I don't need it, but I'm a-gonna have it." I told him I'd been enjoying myself in Chester, even though the fishing stank. He tapped me on the shoulder and said sure, he knew all about it, he'd lived in town for over thirty years. "Fish or no fish, people here will help you," he said. "And that's the truth of it."

GREENVILLE is an old quartz-mining town about twenty-five miles from Chester, and I drove there the next day to take a break from the North Fork. The streets were jammed with kids from Greenville High School. They had a football game on the weekend, and several jocks in numbered jerseys were cruising around in pickups and shouting about what they were going to do to their opponents. In Greenville, it was 1962. It was Frankie Avalon and Annette Funicello, and it was not so bad. The shopkeepers were talking about deer season. They talked about nailing bucks on hunting trips to real country, like Wyoming.

Although I'd wanted to avoid any fishing, I saw a sign pointing to Round Valley Reservoir, a lake in the mountains above Greenville, and I went to have a look at it. The road in was steep and winding. Aspens were blazing in the midst of Douglas firs. Stumps and withered limbs of trees stuck up out of the water—skeletons

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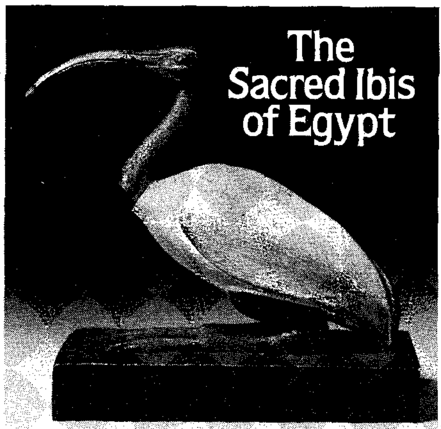

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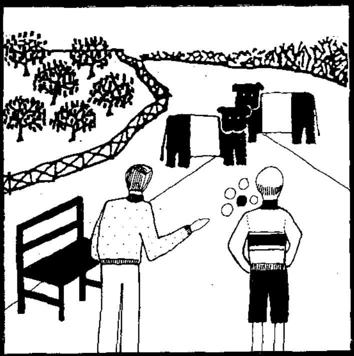

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from the forest that had been drowned when Round Valley was built. There was a considerable growth of moss on the lake, presenting a habitat that seemed ideal for largemouth bass. Largemouths thrive in a weedy environment. They like the abundant cover it provides. In the trunk of the car I had a spinning rod and reel, so I thought I'd do some casting, on the chance that bass might really be around.

The difference between spinning and fly casting lies mostly with the reel. A spinning reel has a fixed spool. When you cast with it, the weight of the lure uncoils your line and pulls it out. By contrast, a fly is almost weightless. What you actually cast with a fly rod is your line. Fly line is heavy. The earliest types were made of braided horsehair, but now they are usually nylon coated with heat-cured plastic. The line used on spinning reels is called monofilament—a single strand of nylon, much like the leader material you tie to the end of a plastic-coated fly line. Spinning tackle, which originated in Europe, became popular in the United States in the nineteen-forties, and in many respects it represents a technological advance over fly tackle. Yet the best and most discriminating anglers always prefer to fish for trout with flies. This is something of an anomaly in sporting life. You don't find tennis players tossing out their jumbo graphite racquets and replacing them with old-fashioned wood.

I grabbed a Jitterbug from my tackle box. It's a terrific lure, maybe three inches long, with a plastic body from which a pair of treble hooks is suspended. It has a scoop-shaped metal paddle in front of its little white eyes, and the paddle raises a ruckus on the water when the lure is reeled in. Bass mistake it for a frog or some other noisy critter. I walked to the edge of the lake and began casting. It was a warm, sunny afternoon, and the air was hazy. After I'd been casting for a while, I noticed a commotion going on, above some reeds by the water. Dragonflies were swirling around, involved in some sort of mating ritual. There were fifty or sixty of them. They were in such a frenzy that their wings made a distinct whirring sound. I leaned my rod against a rock and sat on the ground to watch them.

Dragonflies are widespread in temperate regions of the world, and they've been studied rather assiduously. An English scientist once studied their activities in a bomb crater in Dorset. Sight is their most highly developed sense, but they are often fooled by reflections—a pool of oil on a highway, a shimmering automobile top, a shiny black streak on a laboratory bench. When they have doubts about the reality of a pond or a stream, they check their impression of it by touching their abdomens to it. In dragonfly literature, this is known as "behavior directed toward testing the nature of a reflecting surface." The abdomen of the male dragonfly may be important during courtship. Females are said to be attracted by a show of abdominal color. The desire to copulate is not always reciprocal in dragonflies. Sometimes the male has to force the issue. Sometimes the female is initially responsive and then cools down. If that happens, the male strokes the tip of her abdomen with his expanded hind tibiae, or leg joints. He may also draw her abdomen toward his genitalia. All this goes on aloft, while the male carries the female in the tandem position, holding her by the neck. When they're ready to copulate, they shift into the copulation-wheel position, in which the female's genitalia are placed opposite the male's. The time of copulation varies from species to species. Once it's over, the female flies off to deposit the fertilized eggs.

Some of the dragonflies at Round Valley Reservoir were definitely copulating. They didn't appear to take very long—no more than a minute or so. Other dragonflies seemed to be engaged in aerial battles over territory. They went at one another with an intent to commit mayhem, zooming and diving, like dogfight pilots over the Coral Sea. I was struck by how many different things were going on at once in this infinitesimal corner of the globe. For the dragonflies, this *was* the globe—some reeds, a lake, hazy air, dusty ground. Shortly after mating, they'd be dead. Maybe they knew about other dragonflies in Malaysia or Africa, but I didn't think so. Nature is a single-minded kamikaze when it comes to species propagation. There is a tendency in us human beings to place ourselves above the web of life that supports us, but all it takes is a confrontation with dragonflies to register our similarities even to insects. Frankie Avalon loves Annette Funicello, but Dwayne Hickman's trying to ace him out. Who knows but that a Duke Kahanamoku surfboard has the same function as a bright-colored abdomen? I never did find out if there were any bass in Round Valley Reservoir. My spinning rod stayed propped against the rock, and I sat watching the dragonflies until dark.

I HAD planned to spend a week on the North Fork, and my time was coming to an end. On the last day, I returned to Caribou and did some more floating of Humpies over the pockets. I caught seven fish. The biggest, a brown, went thirteen inches—not anything that Bob of Bob's Bait & Bull would want to preserve with his Polaroid, but a nice trout anyhow. I unhooked the brown and sent it on its way. It swam off into a deep pool, where it would lounge around, wilier now, and gorge cautiously on ants and hoppers and mayflies until it was as stout as a Düsseldorfer with a taste for beer and wurst. Then somebody would probably catch it on a night crawler. Even fish are subject to inflated desires. Oh, this world is mean.

In the morning, I packed up the cabin stuff and took a last walk by the lakeshore. In the shallows, off a wobbly dock, two grebes were dipping their slender necks into the water, looking for minnows. I was going to take the same route home that I'd taken coming up from San Francisco, but at Indian Bar—a fork in the road—I turned left instead of right and followed the river in another direction, toward Quincy, the county seat. Do you understand that this was all new water? There was nothing to do but stop and fish it. I pulled over, opened the trunk of the car, and got out my fly rod again. The Feather was broad and shallow where I waded into it. About twenty yards ahead of me I saw a piece of machinery that turned out to be a suction dredge. Somebody was using it as a hydraulic sluice for gold. "Nothing is more shiny or more rewarding to find than those gold nuggets that one pulls out of a gravel bank," Buzzard wrote. Behavior directed toward testing the nature of a reflecting surface. Under a low-slung limb of a cottonwood, there was a sudden perturbation of the water, and then a swirling movement, and then a dorsal fin. I started casting.

—BILL BARICH

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MUSICAL EVENTS

Heroine

Bellini's Norma is among the most challenging of operatic roles. The composer himself called it "encyclopedic." The soprano who would essay it needs power, grace, pure, fluent coloratura, tones both violent and tender, force and intensity of verbal declamation, and a regal stage presence. Lilli Lehmann, the first Met Norma (in 1890)—who early in this century made noble records of "Casta Diva" and of the heroine's duets with Adalgisa, the seconda donna—sang Clotilde, Norma's handmaiden, in her early Prague years (as Joan Sutherland did, to Maria Callas's Norma, in her early Covent Garden years), and later she sang Adalgisa. But she refused all invitations to tackle Norma until she had mastered Mozart's Donna Anna, Beethoven's Leonore, and Wagner's Isolde; only then did she feel ready to undertake a role she considered "ten times more exacting than Leonore." In her autobiography, Lehmann deplores modern performances of the opera undertaken without due preparation and seriousness: " 'Norma' . . . should be sung and acted with fanatical consecration, rendered by the chorus and, especially, the orchestra with artistic reverence, and led with authority by the conductor; to every single eighth-note should be given the musical tribute that is its due." Several of the sopranos whose recollections appear in Lanfranco Rasponi's "The Last Prima Donnas" say much the same. Ester Mazzoleni, for example, recalls that in the second and third decades of the century "there were three exceptional Normas: Giannina Russ, Celestina Boninsegna, and myself." (All three can still be heard on records.) The prima donna characterizes them—"Russ was a superb virtuosa but a little cold; Boninsegna's tone was utterly ravishing but a little too sweet," and "Mazzoleni, the critics claimed, combined the bel canto art with much fire"—and continues:

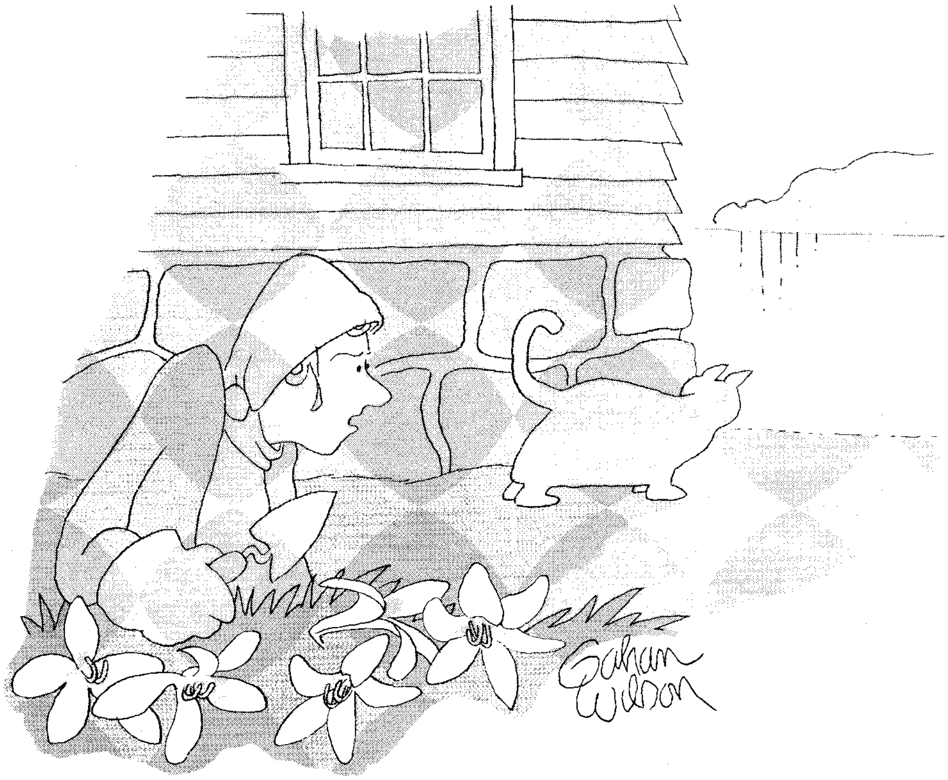
> I simply cannot understand what is happening now. They all sing Norma today—the coloraturas, like Sutherland, Deutekom, and Sills; the lyrics, like Maria Luisa Cioni and Scotto; the spintos, like Caballé, whom I admire in certain roles very much. But how can they do justice to this terrifying score? It is an utter travesty of what Bellini wrote, and the audience takes a lot of punishment.

Gina Cigna, the Met's third Norma (in 1936; Lehmann and Rosa Ponselle were her only predecessors there), says:

> We did not have the mentality of today's singers, who want to sing everything and, alas, are allowed to do so. We were brought up with a deep reverence for the composer and the librettist. Some years ago I was invited to talk in the intermission at the televised "Norma" from La Scala. I never should have accepted, because I always say what I think. It did not sit well with anyone when I announced that what I was hearing was not Bellini's "Norma." . . . Caballé has a God-given, beautiful lyric instrument, but she was forced to force all the time, and I use the same verb twice on purpose.

Mazzoleni's Norma and Cigna's Norma—their recordings show it—had power and temperament, but their singing is often strident and unshapely. I prefer the sound of Caballé's. In the "Norma" performances I've heard her give, she varied. Sometimes, indeed, she did force. When she sang within her strengths—which, *pace* Cigna, were considerable—one admired what the Viennese critic Eduard Hanslick admired in Lehmann: "in slow cantilenas the most beautiful portamento and the securest and purest intonation and swelling [also magical floating and fining down] of the high notes." But—as Hanslick also said of Lehmann—"one may conceive of a thunder of passion more imposing, of lightning flashes of jealousy and anger more incendiary." No Norma seems able to compass all aspects of the role. In our day, Maria Callas came closest to doing so. I learned to love the opera in her performances. When she sang, one was caught up in the work itself. Her successors—Sutherland, Caballé, Sills, Shirley Verrett, Grace Bumbry, Scotto, and, most recently, Olivia Stapp—have tended to induce not so much ecstatic absorption in Bellini's drama as cool assessment of the particular soprano's merits and inadequacies in the tremendous leading role.

The first Norma, Giuditta Pasta, in 1831, had earlier that year created the ingénue heroine, Amina, of Bellini's pastoral opera "La Sonnambula;" as she was a renowned tragic actress, we should not make too much of the fact. (Callas, too, was a notable Amina.) The success as Norma of Jenny Lind, whose most famous roles were perhaps Amina and Donizetti's Daughter of the Regiment, points more convincingly to the possibility of a lighter, less forceful kind of heroine than we usually hear—one who achieves her effects by accuracy and vividness of presentation. Lind's high A's—prominent notes in "Casta Diva" when the aria is sung (as it usually is) transposed down two steps, into F major—were free and brilliant; for the long-drawn middle A that starts the aria



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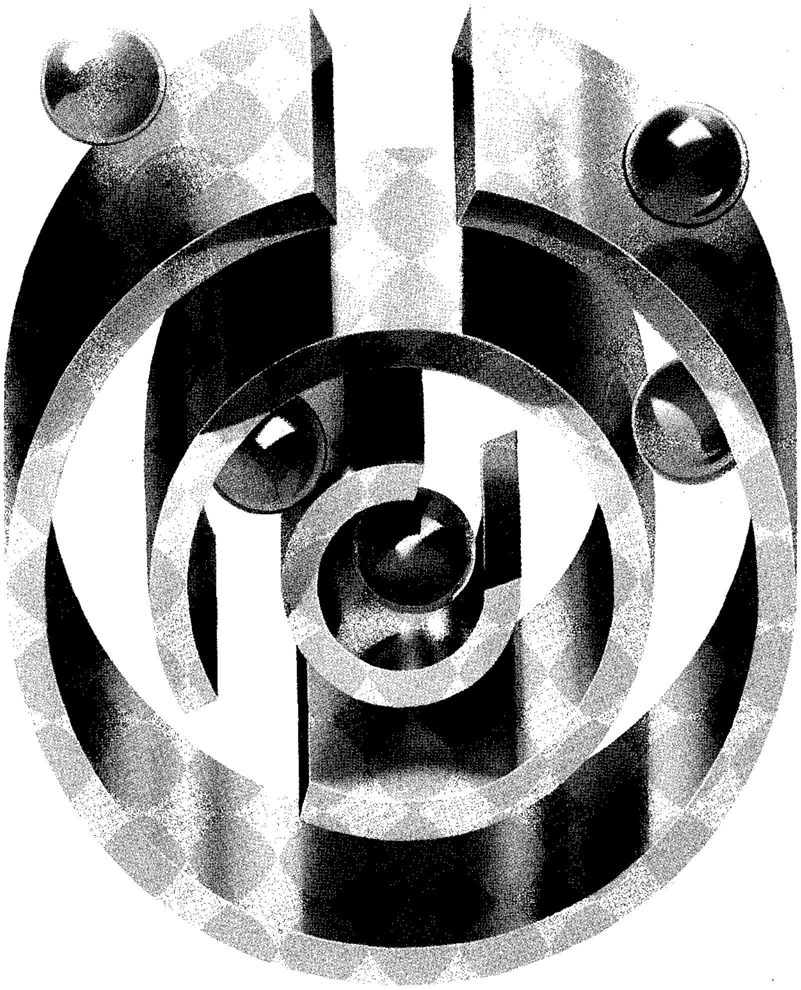

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PURE VIRGIN WOOL

she employed, we are told, "a veiled tone of ravishing beauty." A small-scale "Norma" would hardly be the real thing (Toti Dal Monte's record of "Casta Diva" suggests a charming, pretty little priestess), but a carefully scaled presentation, matched to the strengths of the protagonist, and beautifully and accurately sung, would surely be less distressing, more enjoyable, and more striking than one in which much of the music is stridently and imprecisely voiced, in a vain attempt to sound grandly heroic.

The City Opera's "Norma," the first in its history, is a revised edition of a production, directed by Andrei Serban and designed by Michael Yeargan, that was presented by the Welsh National Opera, in Cardiff, earlier this year. It played in Cardiff's New Theatre, which seats a little over a thousand people. The heroine there was Suzanne Murphy, who had been the Welsh National's Elvira in "I Puritani"—another Serban-Yeargan show—in 1982. British critics described her as tall, beautiful, and dramatically alert—an imperfect singer but an impressive one. (She joins the City Opera "Norma" in November.) The City Opera's current heroine, Olivia Stapp, made her State Theatre début thirteen years ago, as Carmen, and has sung Lady Macbeth, Elektra, and Tosca at the Met. In "Norma," she was an imperfect singer—her intonation errant, her coloratura approximate, her tones often unpleasing—and not impressive. Elena Nicolai, an Adalgisa to many Normas, pays tribute (in Rasponi's book) to those of them whose voices "poured out." Miss Stapp's seemed, rather, to be pushed out. Serban's production did not help her to achieve the character that her singing lacked. Most of his operatic work has been done in Britain: "Eugene Onegin," "Rodelinda," "The Merry Widow," and the two Bellinis for the Welsh, "Il Trovatore" for Opera North (all designed by Yeargan), "Turandot" for the Royal Opera. I've seen only the "Turandot," the "Traviata" he staged for the Juilliard, the City Opera's "Alcina," and now "Norma," and at all of them have been surprised that a stage director whose work for La Mama has been adventurous can be so untheatrical and imperceptive when dealing with lyric drama.

Bellini gave Norma a grand entrance, in the third scene of the opera—the kind of entrance a prima donna dreams of. The setting is the sacred forest of the Druids: in the center stands Irminsul's great oak tree, the Druidical altar stone before it. It is night. Between the trees we see fires flickering in the distance. In this romantic set we have already heard Oroveso's aria and Pollio's aria. Now Druids, priestesses, warriors, bards, acolytes assemble, awaiting the moonrise and the arrival of their high priestess. They sing the solemn, expectant chorus "Norma viene." (A cancelled page in the autograph score shows how carefully Bellini prepared and timed the heroine's arrival.) Norma appears, her tresses streaming, her brow crowned with verbena, a golden sickle in her hand. She mounts the Druidical stone and gazes around her as if inspired. All are silent—and then Norma breaks into that silence with her opening words, "Sediziose voci."

In the City Opera production, there was a dumpy little woman busily pottering about in the very first scene, in stockinged feet. Her tattered black dress stopped short above her ankles. She wore a golden apron and fancy headgear; a stiff hank of artificial red hair fell down her back; she carried a sickle and a piece of cloth. She looked like a bag lady who'd found some finery, and I assumed she was the Druids' temple cleaner, a new character Serban had invented. She was bustling about again, amid the throng, in the third scene—and then, suddenly, she turned round and sang "Sediziose voci," and I realized she was to be the heroine of the evening. Rasponi's book records a piece of advice that Wera Amerighi-Rutili (a Norma "of huge dimensions, but with a nobility that left one in awe," whose recordings of the role are untidy and overemotional but highly dramatic) gave to Nicolai when she sang her first Adalgisa:

> The entrance in an opera is of the greatest importance, for you must let the audience know who you are right away. How you walk, hold yourself, the kind of light your eyes give out—this you must never fail to put across the footlights. . . . If they don't notice you when you come in, it will take a long time for them to do so later.

It took a long time for a bag lady padding about in her socks to turn into a Norma. Nicolai also recalled, of Gina Cigna's heroine, that "her eyes were fantastic—like stars." Miss Stapp was required to sing several of Norma's phrases with her eyes invisible—behind a mask. A City Opera handout informed us that "masks are worn when the characters are presenting their 'public images' or are performing rituals; masks are removed when they are revealing their true feelings." It's a simplistic idea, inappropriate to the style of this opera and hard on the singers. Serban's main concern seemed to be not with the performers but with what at any moment they wore. Masks, aprons, headgear went on and off. Pollio and Adalgisa's duet, "Vieni in Roma," was a striptease in which he pulled off her dress. The defiant martial chorus became a disrobing number in which the Gallic warriors shed their cloaks, and their women scurried on to bundle up the discarded garments and carry them off.

The City Opera is being promoted as a purveyor of opera apprehensible by morons. A page in the "Norma" program book proclaims:

> You don't have to read up on the plot in advance. Or be concerned that you won't be able to follow what's going on. You can just sit back and enjoy yourself, the way you do at a movie with subtitles.

It's a point of view—opera for tired businessmen—but not one that I share. "Norma" seems to me an opera deserving of some effort on the part of the audience as well as of the performers. The City Opera's claim, it is true, is made specifically in relation to the "subtitles"—a simplified, summary translation of the sung Italian text, phrase by phrase, flashed on a screen above the stage more or less at the time the phrase in question is being sung. "At NY City Opera, we give you 'instant understanding.' " It bears the sort of relation to true understanding that instant coffee does to real, or canned peas do to fresh. Useful commodities all, substitutes for people unprepared to devote time and trouble to art or to food. Serban, in fact, doesn't approve of the mechanical glosses. In a *Times* interview, he said that he was "shaking with horror at the prospect of the subtitles," that he believed in "unconscious, secret, invisible communication," and that in operas "where you really must understand what is being said—well, they should just be done in English!" But in the simplified emphases of his staging—the use of masks, for example—he provided something like a visual analogue of the "subtitles." Stage actions and "sub-

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titles" conspired to present a child's-eye view of the rich and subtle work. The overture was treated as an accompaniment to a series of "vignettes," tableaux vivants, of the drama to follow. Into the final scenes Serban had written a prominent new role for Adalgisa (who in Bellini's opera is not present), but he failed to carry his idea through and did not compose anything for Adalgisa to sing. So anyone encountering "Norma" for the first time here gets the impression that Bellini was an incompetent composer and Felice Romani a bungling librettist, who could leave one of their principals mute in the crowning scene of their drama.

Adalgisa was composed for the young soprano Giulia Grisi, who later became a famous Norma herself. In Cardiff, it was sung by a soprano. But mezzo-sopranos have long laid claim to the role, and in the City Opera production Judith Forst, a mezzo-soprano, offered the deftest singing of the evening. She ran about in bare feet and showed her knees a good deal. Two novel features of the Cardiff production were happily dropped in New York: Norma and Adalgisa didn't give the children a wash during the stretta of their "Mira, o Norma," and Adalgisa didn't join Norma on the pyre in the final scene. But "Mira, o Norma" lost its simple poignancy, because Adalgisa neglected the traditional business and the children didn't approach their mother. What should happen—what the text implies—is spelled out, a shade sentimentally, in the scholarly annotated score of "Norma" edited by W. S. Rockstro: "Adalgisa, taking the children, places them on their knees before their mother, and lifts their little hands in a supplicating posture." At the City Opera, the words "ai tuoi ginocchi" were sung but were not enacted or translated; Adalgisa was asked to utter nonsense. The Pollio was Robert Grayson, whose singing was clean but plain, without fire or virtuosity. He suggested a callow N.C.O. rather than the distinguished Roman commander to whom Virgil addressed two Eclogues. William Dansby's Oroveso was not grand. The chorus sounded small. Yeargan's costumes were all black (except for the children, who wore white shifts). His set was a collection of small Roman ruins, disposed in various arrangements against a backcloth lit in different colors. A drift of autumn leaves spanned the front stage in Act I, and in Act II was

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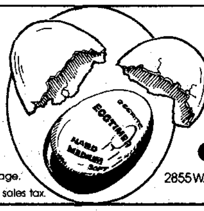

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swept into a heap for the children to play with. Richard Bonynge conducted. Much of the time, he seemed brisk, almost perfunctory. No one since Tullio Serafin has managed the majestic twin climaxes of the finale convincingly: Bonynge simply slammed into low gear at the fortissimo, with jarring results.

VERDI'S "Attila" is a difficult opera to bring off. The characters are unpleasant, the dramaturgy is clumsy, and a fair amount of the music is coarse. In the City Opera production—first staged four years ago, revived this season—two of the large scenic effects on which the composer counted are muffed. The second scene, the founding of Venice, errs by omission. Emanuele Muzio, Verdi's companion and amanuensis, described a "villainous" Scala staging in 1846: "The sunrise occurred before it was indicated in the music. The sea, instead of being rough and stormy, was calm and without a single breaker. The hermits had no hovels; the priests had no altars." In the City Opera version, there was no evident sunrise and no sea at all. The scene of the procession from Rome, led by Leo I, that repulses Attila at the gates of the city (overhead he seems to see giant figures of Sts. Peter and Paul with flaming swords) brought no procession: curtains were drawn back to reveal a choral society assembled outside Attila's tent. For the rest, it's a picturesque show, richly costumed by Hal George. Lotfi Mansouri's old-fashioned staging has its ridiculous moments but is confident. I enjoyed the production more in 1981 when Justino Díaz was the Attila, Marilyn Zschau the Odabella, and Sergiu Commissiona the conductor. Samuel Ramey, in the revival, sang the title role very well but was not much of an actor; his Attila was a series of bold postures rather than a character alert to what happened onstage around him. Linda Roark-Strummer, a lyric soprano, was taxed beyond her vocal capacities by the part of Odabella and pushed what might be an attractive voice into edginess and unevenness. She looked good, moved well, and wore her costumes handsomely. Frederick Burchinal sang Aetius in measured, darkly covered tones, without much brio. Jon Fredric West was an energetic little Foresto. The chorus, as in "Norma," sounded underpowered, and Christopher Keene's conducting was thin-blooded.

—ANDREW PORTER

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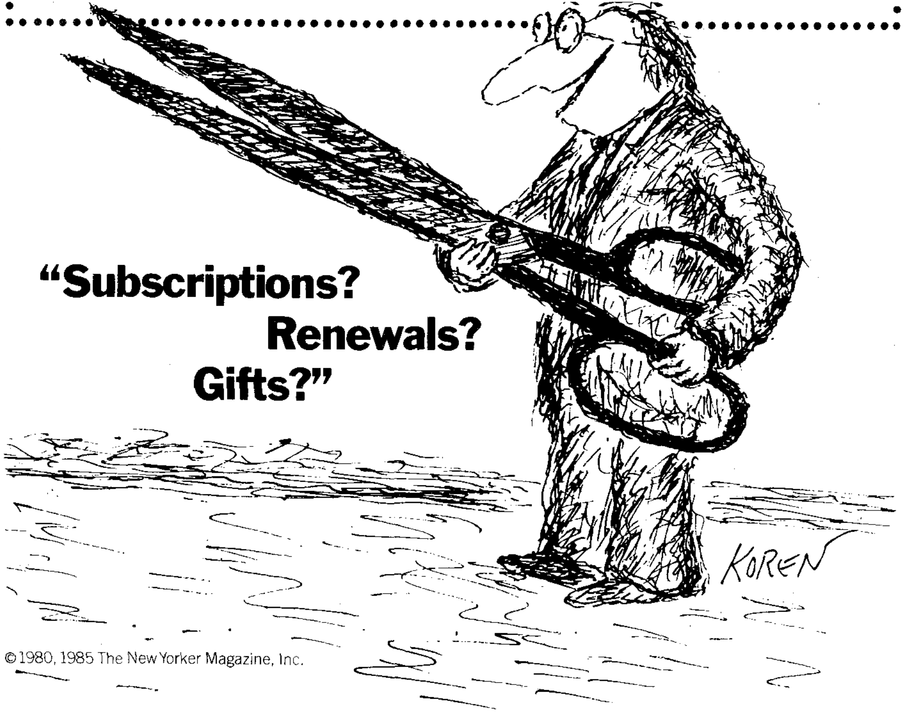
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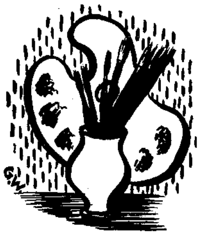


"KARL BODMER'S AMERICA" is one of those pleasant, out-of-the-way exhibitions that turn up only in the summer. At least, that is what I thought when I went to see it at the Metropolitan Museum the other day. (It will be on view there through October 6th.) Selected from a more comprehensive exhibition organized by the Joslyn Art Museum, in Omaha, Nebraska, Bodmer's small-scale landscape sketches and portraits of Indians, done during a year-long expedition into the upper-Missouri wilderness in 1833 and 1834, are the best visual record we have of that landscape and those people: more detailed and more skillful than the drawings of George Catlin, who went up the Missouri just before Bodmer did; fresher and more accurate than those of Alfred Jacob Miller, who visited the Far West in 1837. A nice, undemanding summer show, I figured. About a third of the way through the exhibition, though, while looking at a watercolor called "Junction of the Yellowstone and the Missouri," I began to notice how good Bodmer really is. A sense of vast, almost limitless space inhabits this small picture. Dry, eroded hills lead from the foreground to the river's meandering curve, to its disappearance behind more distant hills and its eventual meeting with the other river, behind which more open, flat space merges with a yellow sky. The coloring is all in earth tones—brown and ochre and shades of green. Three hovering, ragged-looking vultures—the only sign of life—heighten the effect of impersonal nature, untouched by and unaware of man.

Some watercolors of Sioux, Hidatsa, Assiniboin, and Blackfoot warriors next commandeered my attention. Bodmer drew individuals, not ethnic types. His meticulous emphasis on the details of costume and the exact rendering of symbolic ornament did not prevent him from painting real men and women. Sometimes the facial expression is masklike, the deep-set eyes fixed on a distant horizon; but this is not always so, and no face is like another. The Blackfoot known as Iron Shirt is shown with his handsome face ceremonially blackened, the mouth slightly parted, the red-rimmed eyes fixed coolly on the viewer. The Yankton Sioux chief whom the traders called Big Soldier, about sixty years old and more than six feet tall, has a relaxed dignity that accords with his years and his victories. Tâtsicki-Stomíck, a Piegan Blackfoot shown in three-quarter profile, has an expression of intelligent skepticism. No matter how exotic they looked in their ceremonial robes, paint, and feathers, Bodmer did not romanticize Indians. He had been hired by his wealthy German patron, Prince Maximilian of Wied-Neuwied, to provide accurate visual data for what was essentially a scientific expedition, and that is what he did. But Bodmer went further than that. During his time in America, he made many drawings that stand up as first-rate works of art. He had never done this before, and once he left the New World and returned to Europe he never did it again, and that, it seems to me, raises some interesting questions.

Who was Karl Bodmer, anyway? From the large and excellent book, published by the Joslyn Art Museum and the University of Nebraska Press, that serves as the catalogue to the exhibition, I learned that he was born in Zurich in 1809, and that before he set out for America, at the age of twenty-three, he had made his living as a journeyman illustrator. He specialized in travel pictures—paintings of romantic vistas along the Moselle and the Rhine, following the well-established pictorial conventions of that prephotographic era. His meeting with the Prince changed his life. Maximilian, a landed German from an old and aristocratic family, had found his vocation as an explorer and a naturalist. He had spent the years 1815 to 1817 exploring and naturalizing in the jungles of Brazil, inspired by the example of his great countryman Alexander von Humboldt, and when Bodmer met him, in 1832, he was preparing to embark on a similar expedition into the North American wilderness west and north of St. Louis. Maximilian wanted a professional artist to go along, and after looking at samples of Bodmer's work he wrote to a friend that the young Swiss "will be able to draw what is put before him." Their contract was simple and straightforward. Bodmer was to be paid a regular salary, and his original drawings would belong to the Prince. (He was allowed to make copies for himself, if he chose.) Bodmer was a technician, in other words, hired to perform a specific service.

Once they reached St. Louis, in the spring of 1833, and boarded an American Fur Company steamboat headed up the Missouri, Maximilian's letters show increasing respect for Bodmer The artist sketched tirelessly, in all weathers, and his skill seemed to increase day by day. He painted the prairies and grasslands, the herds of elk and other game, the twisting, snag-infested course of the turbulent river, and, later on, the fantastic, water-and-wind-carved rock formations of the Mauvaises Terres, the badlands of the upper Missouri. He responded to the challenge of depicting these landscapes, which resembled nothing he had seen in Europe, largely by abandoning the formal conventions of European landscape painting. Those conventions had been worked out in the seventeenth century by Claude Lorrain, and in Bodmer's watercolor drawings of the American countryside east of St. Louis he had adhered to them closely. But now he dropped Claudian composition (foreground framed by leafy trees, middle ground linked by diagonal watercourse or road to background and horizon), and began to use light as the unifying principle. Sunlight breaks through low clouds to accentuate the sandstone cliffs in his "View of the Stone Walls." Layers of light and shade convey the feeling of immense distances in "First Chain of the Rocky Mountains Above Fort McKenzie." His technique is dazzling—subtle color laid down in delicate washes, every topographical detail brought off with clarity and finesse. He was reinventing the art of landscape painting, and doing so under difficult, sometimes dangerous conditions—driving himself to do what had not been done before.

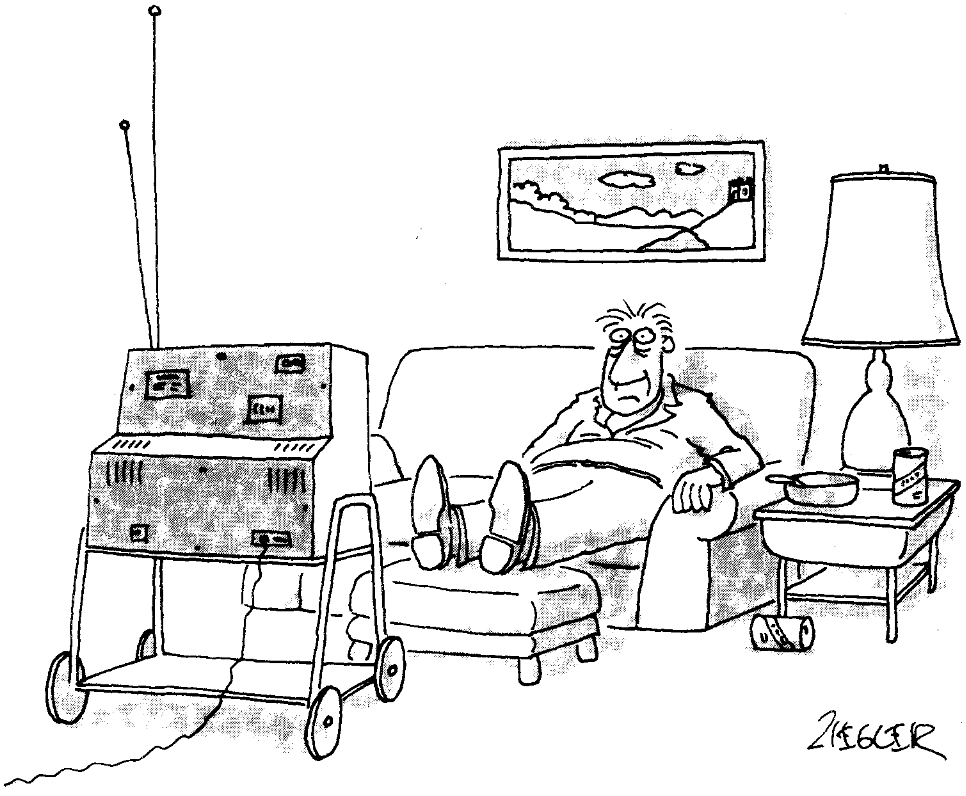
The travellers spent more than a month at Fort McKenzie, the westernmost outpost of the American Fur Company, not far from present-day Great Falls, Montana. The tiny fort was surrounded by an encampment of ferocious Blackfeet, who had only recently started trading with the Americans. A few of them were reluctant to pose for Bodmer, but his persistence usually won them over. They marvel-led at the accuracy of his likenesses. An elderly Piegan insisted that the strong magic of Bodmer's portrait of him had saved his life during a bloody early-morning raid by a detachment of Cree and Assiniboin. Bodmer clearly admired these magnificent-looking people, and on the return trip both he and Maximilian developed warm friendships with the more settled Mandan, near whose village they spent that winter. The Mandan village was above what is now Bismarck, North Dakota, close to the Canadian border, and the visitors' makeshift accommodations there offered little protection from the below-zero weather. Bodmer's paints often froze, but he thawed them out and painted every day, with the diligence and intensity of a man possessed. There is something about his Indian portraits—an impenetrable sadness in the eyes—that I am tempted to call prophetic. In the same way that some of the Missouri landscapes carry a weight of desolation and emptiness, the portraits suggest (to me, at least) the historical doom that was about to descend on those people. Four years after Bodmer painted the upper-Missouri tribes, smallpox struck them, wiping out about half the Blackfeet and virtually the entire Mandan culture. The pattern of white conquest and betrayal was already accelerating. I can't argue that Bodmer was alert to these historical currents. But in his best work he cut so close to the truth of appearances that I think he broke through it into something more profound: the extreme stillness at the moment of great change.

For Bodmer, that moment ended even more suddenly than it did for the tribes. He sailed back to Europe in 1834 and never returned. For some years, he worked on aquatint etchings of his American drawings, for an illustrated volume to go with Prince Maximilian's two-volume narrative of their trip. When the work came out, in 1841, after many delays, it was a financial failure. Having found no takers for his original watercolors, which the Prince had allowed him to exhibit in Paris, Bodmer eventually turned to oil, canvas, and tradition. He became a salon artist whose subjects were life-size paintings of animals and sentimental forest scenes. Apparently, he never again attempted to draw a human face.

After some years in Paris, he moved out to the suburban village of Barbizon, near Fontainebleau, where his friend Jean-François Millet and other artists of the Barbizon school were living. For two decades, he was moderately successful, winning prizes at the salon, selling work, and earning a supplementary income as an illustrator of books and magazines, but fame eluded him. Sometimes he blamed this on his North American adventure. The years he spent on the publication of his American drawings, he wrote to Maximilian in 1853, "did great damage to my career which I will never again be able to recoup or recover." Eventually, his animals and forest scenes went out of fashion. He moved back to Paris, where he lived out his last years in increasing poverty. He died, blind and forgotten, in 1893. Nobody would have heard of him today if the original watercolors and drawings of the expedition had not been discovered, after the Second World War, in a storeroom of Prince Maximilian's estate on the Rhine, near Koblenz. The Prince's descendants put them on exhibition, and eventually sold them to M. Knoedler & Company. In 1962, Knoedler sold them to the Northern Natural Gas Company of Omaha (now called InterNorth, Inc.), which put them on permanent loan at the Joslyn Art Museum.

What are we to make of this story? A mediocre artist (artisan, really) is presented with an immense challenge and for a brief period produces great art, or something close to great art; then he subsides into mediocrity for the remainder of his life, presumably unaware of what he achieved at his finest moment. Was he simply unwilling to keep on paying the enormous price for work of that quality? Bodmer appears to have become a fairly unpleasant chap after his return to Europe, complaining constantly about his publishing arrangements with the Prince (who, by contrast, was unfailingly generous and forbearing toward him), regularly demanding more money, and feeling generally put upon by life. But the fact remains that for more than a year on that trip up the Missouri he worked like a demon, rarely complaining, always pushing his talent to surpass itself. It has been said that during a great period in art, such as the Italian Renaissance, it is possible sometimes for a minor artist to paint a great picture—the work going on around him can actually pull him up to a higher level. For Bodmer, however, alone in an alien wilderness, the pictorial conventions of his time were no help at all.

It could be argued that Bodmer was responding also to the stimulation of his employer's mind. Prince Maximilian was no mere dilettante. A serious naturalist, he was, in addition, a product of those currents in nineteenth-



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century German thought which demanded a merging of the real and the ideal, of pragmatic observation and grand philosophical truth. It was Alexander von Humboldt, Darwin's mentor, who urged Maximilian to take an artist on his North American trip. Humboldt, who was interested in practically everything, saw a need for new forms of landscape art. In his monumental work "Cosmos," he wrote, "Landscape painting will flourish with a new and hitherto unknown brilliancy when artists of merit shall more frequently pass the narrow limits of the Mediterranean, and when they shall be enabled, far in the interior of continents . . . to seize, with the genuine freshness of a pure and youthful spirit, on the true image of the varied forms of nature." Maximilian may very well have communicated such ideas to Bodmer, for the two men became close friends during their long trip together.

To see what the nineteenth-century amalgam of science and idealism did to Frederic Church, Thomas Moran, Albert Bierstadt, and a number of other American artists who painted the American landscape some thirty years after Bodmer, you have only to walk up two flights at the Metropolitan. Bierstadt's huge painting "The Rocky Mountains" (1863) is a gorgeous example of nature as a moral lesson, with its bucolic Indian encampment in the foreground and a celestial golden light bathing the distant peaks. The American art historian Barbara Novak has written a fascinating book on this subject—"Nature and Culture" (Oxford, 1980)—showing how religion, moral philosophy, and nationalism combined to discover in the American landscape an effective substitute for historical culture. For Church and Bierstadt, nature was God's Holy Book, teaching "sublime" moral lessons and justifying man's ways to man. In their huge, operatic paintings there was scarcely a hint of nature's destructive side—dust storms or floods—and little inkling of the far more destructive potential of the white settlers. The American landscape artists of that era civilized the landscape, and they did so by tried-and-true European pictorial means: Claude's composition, Turner's atmospheric effects. As Novak puts it, their work "withdrew newness from the terrain at the very moment it was exalting it."

There is nothing like this civilizing process in Bodmer's pictures. His Indians are not noble savages; his landscapes are never sublime. Quite often, in fact, these small-scale watercolors of treeless plains and hills have an inhospitable look that seems very close to what we can see today in certain parts of the country. The beauty of our Western landscape (what's left of it) is a harsh beauty, and impressive for that reason. Bodmer caught the harshness as well as the beauty, and in his Indian portraits he caught something else—the authentic look of people whose way of life had endured for a long time, knowing nothing of Europe. He got it all down accurately and truthfully, seized it with Humboldt's "genuine freshness," and then he went home to paint noble stags and sylvan glades.

It could never happen to a contemporary artist; and even if it could, how would we know? A few years ago, everybody agreed that Giorgio de Chirico had painted like a genius from 1909 to 1919 or so and like a clod for the rest of his life; now a new generation of European artists loves the clod work. The same thing with late Picasso. Once freed of the ancient burden of representation, modern artists have felt obliged to present something, and what they present, by and large, is themselves. This leads to disturbances of the ego, which in turn make it difficult to get lifted out of oneself in the way Bodmer was. He had a disappointing life, and felt he had wasted his time in America. What a joy it must have been, though, to work at that high level, in that high country, in 1833. Among the Mandan, he was called Kawakapuska, "the one who makes pictures." Years later, Bodmer is reported to have spoken nostalgically and a bit sentimentally about those vanished people: "In Europe I have acquaintances," he said, "but over there I had friends."

—Calvin Tomkins

•

BLOCK THAT METAPHOR!

[*From the Wall Street Journal*]

Like many other old Washington hands, Mr. Walker underestimated the potential popularity of the tax-overhaul movement. "In a micro sense this looked like a political bomb, because it stepped on so many toes," he says. "But its macro political appeal swamped the micro complaints."

•

CHIEF MURPHY SAYS
TRY NOT TO SHOOT PEOPLE
—*San Francisco Chronicle.*

He's all heart, that Murphy.

JAZZ

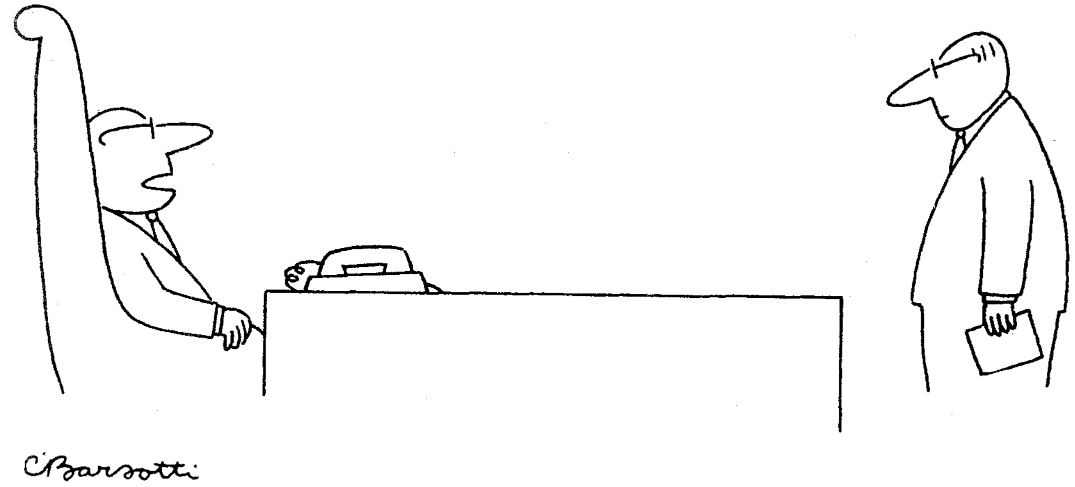
Mingus at Work

LATE in the afternoon of September 18, 1965, at the Monterey Jazz Festival, after three hours of music by Gil Fuller's big band, by the pianist Denny Zeitlin, and by the alto saxophonist John Handy, Charles Mingus brought onstage a new octet, made up of three trumpets (Lonnie Hillyer, Hobart Dotson, Jimmy Owens), a French horn (Julius Watkins), a tuba (Howard Johnson), an alto saxophone (Charles McPherson), drums (Dannie Richmond), and himself on bass and piano, and in the next half hour or so played four numbers, the last of them a parody of "When the Saints Go Marching In," and left the stage. It was a puzzling performance. Mingus seemed inert, the music was spiritless and unevenly played, and the set had an abortive air. I suspected at the time that Mingus was feeling out of sorts because the preceding band, a quintet led by John Handy, a former Mingus sideman, had given a fiery, perhaps untoppable set, and I wrote in this magazine that "only great teachers are upstaged by their own pupils." It turns out, with the release of "Charles Mingus: Music Written for Monterey, 1965: Not Heard . . . Played in Its Entirety at U.C.L.A." (East Coasting Records), that Mingus's lacklustre behavior had nothing to do with Handy. The album, recorded at a U.C.L.A. concert a week later, includes the eight numbers Mingus had planned for Monterey. It also offers two solutions to the Mingus Monterey mystery. One is given in the liner notes, in a paraphrase of something written by Jimmy Lyons, the festival's producer and founder, in a kind of history of the festival published five or six years ago as "Dizzy, Duke, the Count and Me." The passage in the book goes like this:

> The following year we brought [Mingus] back. But there was a screw-up with some records he recorded himself and wanted to sell at Monterey. You had to buy them through him. He said the records were never shipped out here. That's when I had to get on my knees.
>
> He was wearing a bowler hat, dark suit. He got me on stage and said to his band, "I think I'll just take the money and pay you guys off and this ofay bastard is standing here and he's going to make me play when he hasn't done what he was supposed to be doing." He looked at me and said, "You want me to play?"
>
> I said, "Of course, it's in your contract. I've given you half the money."
>
> "Okay, you get down on your hands and knees and beg me."
>
> I got down on my knees.

Mingus offers the second solution. In his opening remarks in the album, he says, "We're going to play the music we planned to play [at Monterey]. But for some reason—this is not an apology—we only had twenty minutes. No one knows who the guy was with the red beard—Jesus, Buddha, Moses, Muhammad, somebody, but he say get off. They can't find him. Neither can I." The truth may well lie somewhere between. The concert was already three hours old and people had started to leave, which wouldn't have pleased Mingus much; Mingus, never patient, was probably exasperated at having to wait so long; and maybe some records that he wished to sell *hadn't* arrived. In any case, we now know what we missed on that hot, blue afternoon, and we also have, in the East Coasting album, an invaluable account of Mingus at work. Mingus had the U.C.L.A. concert recorded, and he released it on his label a year later. (Only two hundred copies were pressed.) It included not only all the music (except for an "I Can't Get Started") but also his introductions, his admonishments to the band, an aside to the "New York jazz critics," jokes, philosophy, and his recitation of one of his song-poems. Mingus was an utterly natural man. He never adjusted to a situation; the situation adjusted to him. So here he is working hard in front of a college audience—a musical magician, a tireless agitator, a brilliant seer. This is how the album goes:

After his introduction, Mingus and his tubist, Howard Johnson, start an eighteen-minute number called "Meditation on Inner Peace." It is one of Mingus's "conversation" pieces. That is, at various points the soloists, instead of constructing abstract musical improvisations, "talk" to one another through their instruments, making sounds that resemble questions, exclamations, laughter, expressions of sympathy, and the like. Mingus begins arco over Johnson's two-beat ground bass. Jimmy Owens and Mingus play contrapuntally. Owens drops out, and Mingus plays great solo double-stops. McPherson enters, and he and Mingus "talk." Dannie Richmond reinforces Johnson's two-beat bass. Julius Watkins and Mingus talk. Mingus plays by himself, then talks with one of the trumpeters. The trumpeter starts playing high notes, the band comes in behind, and things grow agitated. The ground bass gets faster and faster. The band goes into one of Mingus's semitonal collective scrambles, and falls away as the ground bass slows down to a walk. There are more trumpet shouts, Richmond sets off some round-the-set explosions, Mingus plays some piano chords, and the piece ends. Mingus introduces his sidemen, and announces "Once Upon a Time, There Was a Holding Corporation Called Old America." (What a strange mixture of poetry, Dadaism, anger, and laughter Mingus's song titles were! They make Duke Ellington's sound Arcadian.) He talks to the band, and they go into



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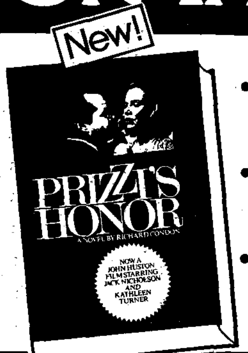
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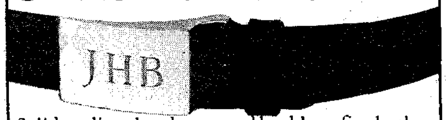

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a mournful melody and stop. Mingus plays the melody on the piano, and the band starts and stops again, and he sends half the band "to the back room to figure this thing out," keeping Hillyer, Richmond, and McPherson. These three plus Mingus begin "Ode to Bird and Dizzy," a fast mixture of solos and quotes from such famous bebop numbers as "Salt Peanuts," "A Night in Tunisia," and "Hot House." McPherson solos while Mingus and Richmond trade four- and two-bar breaks behind him (a unique accompanying device), and Hillyer solos. Mingus and Richmond move to the fore together in an exhilarating way, and Richmond solos. (Mingus loved Richmond. He had converted him from a tenor saxophonist into the best drummer he ever had, and one of the best of the post-bebop drummers.) The number ends at an unmanageable speed. The full band plays an ad-lib dirge that was done at Monterey—"They Trespass the Land of the Sacred Sioux." It lasts eight minutes, and is arranged around a lovely Mingus melody and solos by Owens and McPherson. "The Arts of Tatum and Freddy Webster" follows. What it has to do with Art Tatum and Webster is not clear; it is still another dirge, and it is taken up with some lush Hobart Dotson trumpet and by several tempo changes. More rich Mingus melody is offered in the second (and successful) attempt at "Once Upon a Time, There Was a Holding Corporation Called Old America"—a somewhat disjointed eleven-minute piece full of Mingus shouting, wild French horn, and trumpet solos. Mingus offers some of his vest-pocket philosophizing before the number starts: "I feel pretty free here [in America]," he tells the audience. "I don't feel confined, or anything like that. . . . You're only confined by your own self and what you wanted to do and didn't do when you was a little boy or a big boy, and all of a sudden you find yourself trapped by yourself, but you blame it on other people. It's a pretty way of thinking." (Mingus once asked this writer, backstage at the Village Vanguard, "What's a forty-five-year-old man doing playing the bass?") Then Mingus does a rough, not very convincing parody of "Twelfth Street Rag" (not "Muscrat Ramble," as it is called on the album), and breaks for an intermission, first taking care of business by summoning (presumably) the student in charge of the concert: "Peter James Thompson, I'd like to see you in the back. Peter, we have a little matter to work out financially." A pleasant, eight-minute medium-tempo number, with two strains, called "Don't Be Afraid, Because This Clown's Afraid, Too" opens the final section of the concert, and is followed by "Don't Let It Happen Here," a Mingus recitation-with-music that goes in part:

> One day, they came and they took the Communists, and I said nothing, because I was not a Communist.
>
> Then one day, they came and they took the people of the Jewish faith, and I said nothing because I had no faith left.
>
> One day they came and they took the unionists, and I said nothing, because I was not a unionist.
>
> One day they burned the Catholic churches, and I said nothing, because I was born a Protestant.
>
> Then one day they came and they took me, and I couldn't say nothing because I was as guilty as they were for not speaking out and saying that all men have a right to freedom on any land.

The music that follows is classic, explosive Mingus.

The liner notes of the album include reproductions of documents explaining how the master tapes of the U.C.L.A. concert, stored with Capitol Records in New York in the sixties, were destroyed in 1971 when the New York studio was closed. If Mingus wasn't bedevilling himself, someone else was bedevilling him.

—WHITNEY BALLIETT

•

A DELICATE MOMENT IN THE CANADIAN HOUSE OF COMMONS

[*From Commons Debates*]

POINT OF ORDER

WITHDRAWAL OF COMMENT CONSIDERED INAPPROPRIATE

MR. JACK SHIELDS (ATHABASCA): Mr. Speaker, last night during Private Members' Hour an occasion arose when I paraphrased a quote from Shakespeare, when I referred to the casting of pearls before swine. In the context that I did it, I think it falls into the category which you just outlined. Although it was not ruled out of order, not being unparliamentary, it was not an appropriate comment. The Hon. Member for Algoma rose and asked for the remarks to be withdrawn, which I did not do. A Member from the New Democratic Party also rose and asked that I withdraw the remark.

Upon reflection, I would like to withdraw the remark because I certainly did not want to cast any aspirations on any Members of this House sitting on the other side.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SPEAKER: I think we will correct *Hansard* one more time and say that I think the Member meant allusions—

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Perhaps it is aspersions.

BOOKS

Two Presidents

"THE WARRIOR AND THE PRIEST: WOODROW WILSON AND THEODORE ROOSEVELT," by John Milton Cooper, Jr. (Harvard; $20 cloth, $9.95 paper), is an engrossing study of rival statesmen who, between them, dominated the national scene for the first two decades of this century, and who were, the author believes, "the principal architects of modern American politics." Mr. Cooper is at ease with his subjects and at home in their period, and he puts his learning at our disposal in a clear, active, engaging style. Wilson (1856-1924) and Roosevelt (1858-1919) have one striking similarity: they were born with disabilities. Roosevelt publicized his struggle to remake the nearsighted, sickly, puny boy he was into the hardy outdoorsman he became, but we know practically nothing about the young Wilson's conquest of dyslexia. The personalities that emerged from these youthful ordeals were extraordinarily self-confident, but Roosevelt was ebullient and histrionic, while Wilson was reflective and detached. Both men were drawn to public life. Roosevelt, who had inherited an income, could afford to start out as an honest New York State assemblyman; Wilson, who had not, became a college teacher of political science. Both were successful: Roosevelt became President of the United States in 1901; Wilson became president of Princeton in 1902.

Mr. Cooper's narrative revives the greatness of these competing reformers, which has somewhat faded in our understanding. Except for his indisputable role as a founding father of American conservation, Theodore Roosevelt's heritage has come to seem diffuse, because it has been divided between two parties, and because his energetic language has masked his diplomacy and—when he was in power—his caution. Wilson's failure to persuade the Senate to ratify the Covenant of the League of Nations has obscured his earlier achievements. If Roosevelt, who presented himself as a doer, is misremembered as an overdoer, Wilson's memory has been vulnerable to clichés about ineffectual intellectuals. Mr. Cooper shows us how well Wilson translated political theory into political practice—his involvement in the formulation and passage of the Federal Reserve Act of 1913 is one of many instances that serve as models of executive leadership—and also reminds us that Wilson administered a war effort of "unprecedented honesty and efficiency."

Roosevelt first came to the Presidency by succession—he was Vice-President when McKinley was assassinated. He was elected in his own right in 1904, but he declined a third term and picked William Howard Taft for the Republican nomination. Taft was elected in 1908, and the following year former President Roosevelt travelled abroad, returning in 1910—the year that former President Wilson of Princeton was elected governor of New Jersey. Throughout Roosevelt's first term, he and Wilson had admired each other, but Wilson's adherence to the Democrats brought them into conflict. Roosevelt, dissatisfied with Taft, who retained the support of the Republican Old Guard, ran on a third-party ticket—as a Progressive—in 1912, when Wilson was the victorious Democratic nominee. Mr. Cooper sees in that election a debate between Roosevelt and Wilson on political philosophy. However, the division between Roosevelt and Wilson did not freeze in 1912. Wilson's first term was a triumph of reform, and the Democratic Party attracted Progressives—particularly after 1916, when Roosevelt returned to the Republican fold. Thereafter, Roosevelt's criticisms of Wilson were harmonized with Republican orthodoxy as he maneuvered for the Republican nomination in the next election; he died almost two years before it took place. Wilson's superlative management of the war found him pursuing Rooseveltian aims—the government planned for and controlled coöperation between business and labor. His third stroke, in 1919, impaired his functioning as President and his political influence in the three and a half years he lived after he left office. Supporters, allies, and protégés of both men returned to serve

"No, George, I do not want any more food for thought."

side by side under Franklin Roosevelt.

Much as Mr. Cooper looks back to the division between Roosevelt and Wilson, so Roosevelt himself looked back to the division between Hamilton and Jefferson. He exalted the Hamiltonian emphasis on nationalism, ascribing to Jefferson (and, by extension, to the Democratic Party of his own time) a legalistic parochialism unequal to the task of harnessing particular interests to achieve national greatness—which Roosevelt envisioned as an American diplomatic and military presence throughout the world. Roosevelt's allegations were partly true, and their truthfulness represented both political and intellectual difficulties for Wilson. William Jennings Bryan and his followers, who might be called the "left" of the Democratic Party, were pacifists; in 1915-1916, when Wilson proposed a military-preparedness program, he faced the opposition of the Bryanite House majority leader. The Democratic South maintained that Jefferson's indefeasible legacy was states' rights, and conservative Democrats everywhere believed that the cornerstone of Jeffersonianism was minimal government. Wilson, like Roosevelt, was an activist, temperamentally incapable of becoming a minimalist President of anything; besides, he was convinced that twentieth-century government and twentieth-century executives needed far-reaching powers. He did, however, learn from Jefferson that Presidents are also party leaders, and he cobbled together a coalition of "outsiders" which foreshadowed the Democratic coalition that was assembled by Franklin Roosevelt. Mr. Cooper thinks that in the 1912 campaign—since parties do seem to shape their leaders as well as leaders their parties—Wilson was Jeffersonian.

A Hamilton-Jefferson division recurs between Roosevelt and Wilson over the question of who should govern. Mr. Cooper describes Roosevelt as an aristocrat who despised greedy moneymakers and hedonistic wastrels and wished to redeem the American élite by involving it in politics. Like Hamilton, he wanted to coöpt the money power for the national purpose. Mr. Cooper points out that Roosevelt thought of himself as a member of the governing class, that he was uncomfortable with his Progressive following, and that his aim was always to take over and make over the Republican Party. Wilson thought about the individual and repeatedly called for political renewal from below; he wanted government to clear the way for able people to rise. Roosevelt crusaded against the trusts because they challenged the power of the state, Wilson because they interfered with the liberty and opportunity of the individual. Wilson believed that individuals pursuing their own interests could serve the public good. His concern with disadvantaged groups and individuals, Mr. Cooper observes, foreshadows the modern "broker state." Roosevelt was less concerned with meritocracy and more inclined to treat the lower classes fairly in their station. His concept of government regulating large concentrations of economic power rather than breaking them up foreshadows the welfare state. A crucial division between the two men is that, like Hamilton, Roosevelt thought human beings inherently base, while the Jeffersonian Wilson regarded the species with optimism.

Roosevelt's low view of mankind helps account for his obsession with transcending greed, materialism, and private interest; he regarded war as beneficial, because he thought that individuals forget their selfish interests in a great national effort. Wilson began the twentieth century as a supporter of Roosevelt's imperial and martial policies. The two men agreed that the time for isolation had passed, and that the United States, a great power, should not shirk its international role. But their interpretation of that role changed, particularly after the outbreak of the First World War. Mr. Cooper believes that the deaths of American servicemen in the Veracruz incident, of 1914, made Wilson think about the cost of war, and that as he observed the combat across the sea he found modern war no longer glamorous or heroic. Wilson's comments as he struggled to keep this country neutral stress his awareness that war would foreclose further domestic reform and evoke a violent spirit incompatible with the search for a just peace and a just international order. Wilson's reasoning on the eve of war does him credit in our eyes, but it did him none in Roosevelt's. Roosevelt thought Wilson a coward. His criticisms continued after our entry into the war, for he scorned Wilson's concept of a peace without vindictiveness, and sought a postwar great-power hegemony. There is a stylistic coherence in both men's views, domestic and international: Roosevelt thinking of arrangements between large units, Wilson of equity among small.

In international affairs, Wilson's is the nobler vision, but in the twentieth century Wilsonian internationalism has had no international constituency. After the First World War, his policy of self-determination created new nation-states whose behavior was as shortsighted as that of the European empires they replaced: as soon as the Munich settlement had awarded the Sudetenland to Germany, both Poland and Hungary extracted further territory from the defenseless Czechoslovakia. The disappearance of worldwide empires after the Second World War has not brought harmony among the newest nations, and the tendency toward national economic planning has weakened the cause of economic internationalism. Can we, after all, attain the kind of equitable, juridic, irenic internationalism Wilson sought through the principle of nationality? Roosevelt's call for unselfish service to the state, particularly in war, sounds strident, pagan, and, as he himself cheerfully admitted, "barbarian." Yet the decay, defeat, and suicide of the French Third Republic remind us that the fears he expressed are not groundless, and, with allowances for differences in national style, one can see de Gaulle and Gaullism as embodiments of Roosevelt's ideal. Nonetheless, one would, ideally, wish not to need a de Gaulle for one's own country. Orwell's call for a reunion between intelligence and patriotism is a prescription easier to write than to fill.

American politics of the Roosevelt-Wilson era is a marvellous man-made fabric of earnestness and opportunism. There is no cynicism about self: across the spectrum, from Old Guard to Young Turk, all the political participants in all the parties regarded themselves as the nation's last best hope. The Republican Old Guard believed, Mr. Cooper tells us, that with anyone but them at the helm the country would be plunged into a depression, while Roosevelt's Progressive followers seem to have shared his mistaken notion that in transcending material interests one automatically transcends self. The means by which high-minded party coalitions formed and re-formed themselves during these twenty years were frequently opportunistic. Leading Republicans, including Henry Cabot Lodge, called for a league of nations well before Wilson announced his support for American participation in such an institution, in 1916; but when Wilson adopted the cause Republicans began tiptoeing out of the League to Enforce Peace (Taft was its head) and reconciling such onetime Republican insurgents as Senator William Borah, of Idaho, who had no political place to go while there was bipartisan agreement on foreign policy. During the decades before the First World War, there was an enormous amount of coming and going among the parties, and Mr. Cooper's rich narrative suggests the reasons that, when these multitudes of farewell symphonies concluded, the players in 1920 had rearranged themselves very much as the parties had been in 1900. The endurance of the personalities of our political parties is awesome. Their traits, lasting through time, and the nature of intraparty quarrels as well, give us a feeling that they are like great families.

Mr. Cooper's thoughtful account of the past becoming the present is one reason for his work's attractiveness: the issues and arguments of the period seem anything but remote; when he writes about them and then, he is also writing about us and now. The reader may find, paradoxically, that this book at once strengthens his own political allegiance and increases his respect for the opposition. Wilson and Roosevelt enlisted the emotions of our forefathers and so were elevated from the realities of American government into the romance of folklore: the Rough Rider and the minister's son—the one all teeth and the other all jaw. Mr. Cooper's restoration of their humanity points out their flaws—not only each man's particular errors but the mistakes and limitations to which his temperament inclined him—and it also resurrects their human, rather than their mythical, greatness. In the everyday practice of politics, they framed questions to which we still seek answers. —Naomi Bliven

BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

Coming Down Again, by John Balaban (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; $15.95). Mr. Balaban is an American poet familiar with Southeast Asia and fluent in Vietnamese, and this novel, his first, is set in the Golden Triangle (Thailand-Burma-Laos) of the opium trade, at the end of the Vietnam War. The story is essentially a simple one. An American veteran of the war is dying of cancer, and one of his friends and an English girl accompany him to India, where he hopes to be treated by a faith healer. He dies soon after their arrival. The two others travel into Burma, are arrested at the Thai border for possession of drugs, and are jailed in a remote upcountry prison camp. They get word to a third American, and he hires a native bandit leader and opium dealer to join him in a plan to help them escape. Mr. Balaban is not a poet for nothing. He has thought about America and the American Vietnam War, and his reflections and his art have transformed a fine adventure story into a very fine novel—a Conradian novel, with a Conradian theme of integrity, a novel rich in language of action and of description, which is used to achieve the Conradian aim "to make you *see*." And *see* we do, and with an intensity that is almost too much to bear.

Last Ferry to Manly, by Jill Neville (Penguin; $3.95 paper). "Seven Miles from Sydney and a Thousand Miles from Care," the slogan of the Manly Fun Pier, sums up Lillian's hopeful motives in renting a fifty-dollar-a-week apartment with, as she puts it, a millionaire's view. An Australian journalist who left Sydney for London seventeen years before and who left London for Paris a few years later, Lillian has left her husband and her children, and is aboard the ferry to Manly, on the wrong side of Sydney Harbor, as this involved and haunting novel begins. A beachcomber on the ferry does not like the way she contemplates the harbor's depths, but the suicide on her mind is not her own. Three chapters recall Lillian's life in London, where she lived, at first, with a heartbroken woman, and where she worked, for a while, for a heartbreaking man. Four chapters describe her flirtations with a surfer about half her age, and with a lesbian whose commune she is investigating for a Sydney newspaper article. By the end of the sixth chapter, three suicides have surfaced; by the end of the seventh Lillian's role in them has put paid to the Fun Pier's slogan. A telling portrait, enhanced by phrases such as the "wobbling tray of reflections" that is—for Lillian, at least—Sydney Harbor.

Looking for Bobby, by Gloria Nor-

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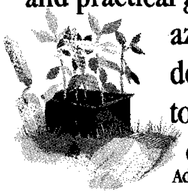

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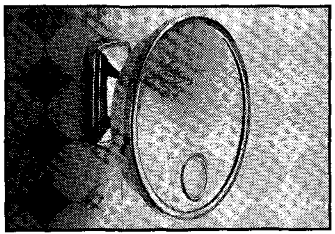

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ris (Knopf; $15.95). It starts out (Part One: 1978) promisingly—a bored Southern wife, named Marianne, hightails it to Manhattan and is not met at the station by her incorrigible cousin Bobby—but then Gloria Norris, who has written prize-winning short stories, loses steam. Bobby has just traded in a career on Wall Street for the high-risk role of an Off Broadway director; his début will be a radical reinterpretation of "The Sea Gull," set in the American South. By the time Marianne has proved to be an able assistant stage manager, civil war has broken out among the cast and crew, and Bobby disappears. Part Two: 1949-71 is an account of Marianne's disappointing marriage and of her promising childhood, which featured her promising and disappointing—disappearing—cousin. Part Three: 1981 takes Marianne to Hollywood, before a ludicrous last scene, south of the South, featuring Bobby as a mushroom-eating mystic.

GENERAL

RANDOLPH: THE BIOGRAPHY OF WINSTON CHURCHILL'S SON, by Anita Leslie (Beaufort; $16.95). An intimate portrait, by a cousin. Randolph Churchill (1911-68) was spectacularly handsome and witty, a talented writer and journalist, and had a well-earned rakehell reputation; he fitted the Frenchman's classic definition of an Englishman—"one who annoys everyone but is not himself annoyed"—and was puzzled when people took umbrage at his outrageous behavior. Miss Leslie does not fudge that aspect of his nature—the word "insufferable" keeps cropping up in her book—but she makes it plain that there was more to Randolph than a drunken upper-class boor. He was fearless, and had a distinguished war record; he was a snob, but, as a friend once said in extenuation, "he was as rude to ambassadors as he was to waiters." (Tanis Guinness, who was often his hostess, said of him, "I was always so pleased to have him arrive but *greatly relieved* to see him go.") He was an adoring son to his father, who adored him; a loyal friend; and a man who searched all his life for the love that was denied him in childhood by a mother wholly wrapped up in her husband. His true achievement was the acclaimed biography of his father, of which he was able to finish only two volumes. A sad story, but one punctuated by much hilarity and high jinks. Photographs.

ON WRITING AND POLITICS, 1967-1983, by Günter Grass, translated from the German by Ralph Manheim, with an introduction by Salman Rushdie (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; $13.95). Essays and speeches by the German writer, who is also an active worker in West Germany's Social Democratic Party. Grass is eloquent and entertaining in arguing for political democracy and reformist rather than revolutionary policies. In his discussions of writers and trade unions, he reminds his audience how often Europe's writers have preferred to be trendy and wrong. Over the years, Grass has moved toward a plague-on-both-your-houses approach to Russia and the United States; although American readers may not share his opinions, they will understand why he holds them. But, because he writes about politics with a precision that politicians usually avoid, it is disturbing to find him carrying on as if a Christian Democratic election victory threatened West German democracy.

MYSTERY AND CRIME

FISH STORY, by Richard Hoyt (Viking; $13.95). John Denson is a Seattle private eye whose best friend is a Cowlitz Indian named Willie Prettybird, and they both hang out at a bar on Pioneer Place where customers in business suits, customers in blazers, and customers who drink corked (as opposed to screw-top) wine are unwelcome. Denson is involved here in an Indian salmon-fishing-territory case that suddenly flares into murder and sawed-up bodies. Mr. Hoyt gives good measure. In addition to Denson's problem, which is a very good one, he tells us about dart throwing, about wild mushrooms (toxic as well as tasty), about the underground city beneath Seattle, about the salmon fishery, and he gives us one of the creation stories about the Indian god Coyote.

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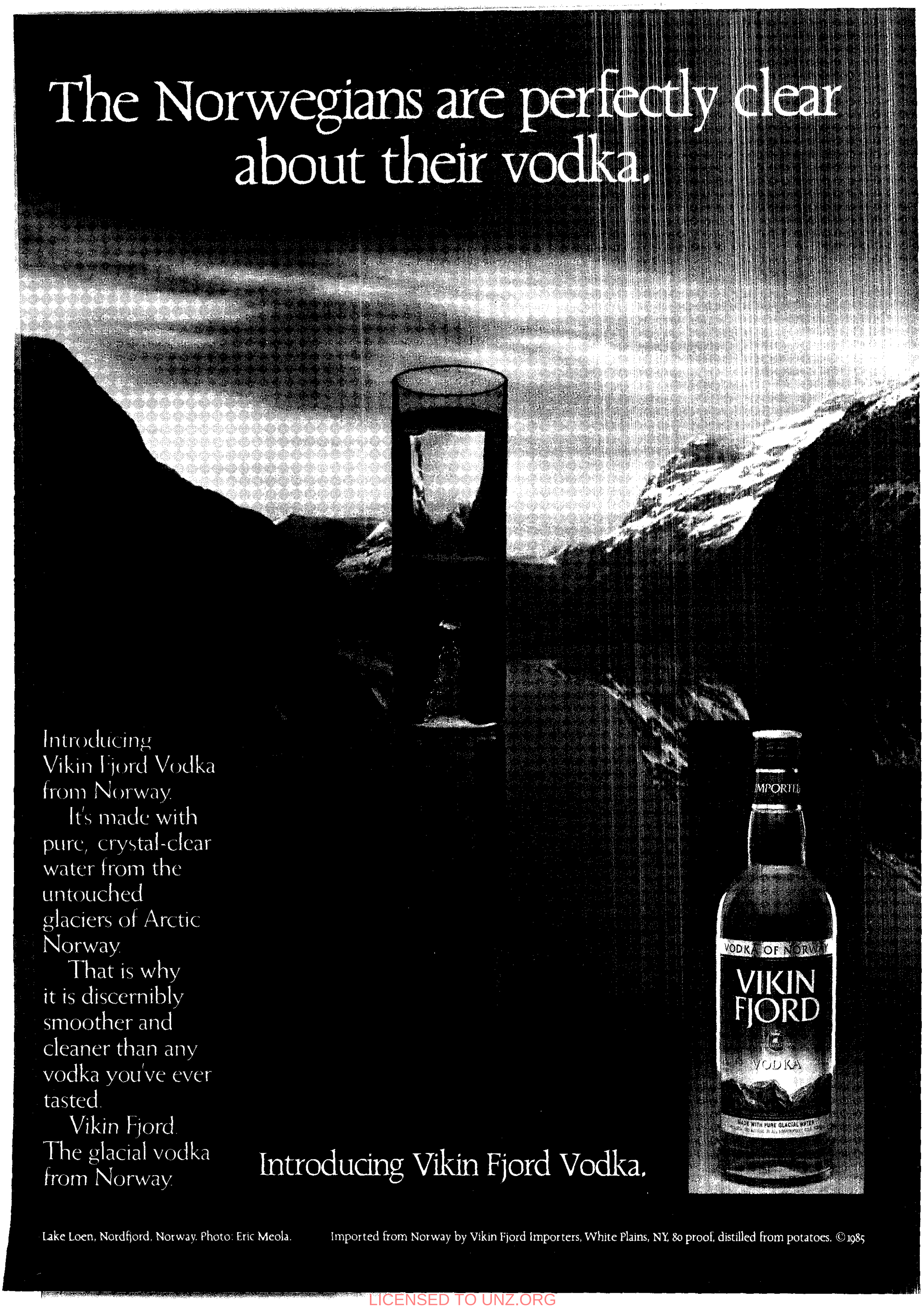

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